ART | ARCHITECTURE | HISTORY

BHUJ

When a horrifying earthquake in 2001 reduced large parts of the 16th-century city of Bhuj to rubble, residents shook their heads with disbelief, awed at the prospect of reconstruction. Five years after that unforgettable morning, this book narrates the city's story of urban development over 450 tumultuous years, revisiting the work of potentates and commoners as they went about shaping its charming, if idiosyncratic, outline.

Illustrated with pictures and stories obtained from residents, museums, and local organizations in Bhuj, the book combines ethnography, a comment on the relationship between craft and city-building, and a thought-provoking critique of present-day development trends. Rare 19th- and 20th-century photographs complement the book's narrative, which describes the fascinating economic role that the arts have played in city-building, and the prospects ahead to marshall them as instruments of future development. It is a book for citizens and visitors wanting an unconventional introduction to Bhuj, and a portfolio of evidence for city planners, policy-makers, and investors in the city – disaster or no disaster.

With 146 colour and 129 b&w photographs and 15 maps

Cover

Front: View of Hamirsar Lake from the Lakhota, Bhuj, probably 1920s. (See page 132)

Back: The shadowed outline of a house, its only remnant after its demolition, 2003. (See page 275)

SHOUT
SHARE
IT

MADHAPAR
VILLAGE

BHUJ

See also map on pages 156–157

250m 0 250m 750m

N

BHUJ

ART | ARCHITECTURE | HISTORY

BHUJ

AZHAR TYABJI

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To my parents, Hasan and Zehra Tyabji, to whom I became the consummate nomad;

To my 'Periappa' S. Guhan, late development economist, who wrote for Everyman;

And to all my friends and mentors in Bhuj, who showed me what strength there lies in loss.

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Frontispiece: The *bajaaniya*, or Siddi warrior elevated on stilts in the annual Nagpanchmi procession sometime in the 1930s, Bhuj. The warrior's sword and shield would have been forged in the city's workshops operated by the *Lohar* blacksmith community, and decorated with silver patterns by the Soni silversmiths in the Soni-Kansara Bazaar in Bhuj in the 18th and 19th centuries.

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Inscription on a late-19th century bird-feeder, built in honour of Maharao Khengarji III (1876–1942), Bhuj: "Man, animal and bird, all complement each other in the world of the Almighty. This bird-feeder has been built for the love of the Almighty and the happiness of Maharajadhiraja Mirza Maharao Shree Khengarji by his teacher and secretary, the Honourable Chhotalal Sevakram, who lives in Ahmedabad."

The bird-feeder was demolished after the earthquake of 2001.

Codes of conduct, which enjoin Western archaeologists, art historians, and other conservators stress the integrity of the object. No collector's greed, scholarly zeal, conquerer's hubris, or market force should take precedence over the intact survival of the precious artifact.

In my view, this priority is futile and mistaken. It fetishizes objects, endowing them with quasi-human, if not divine, sanctity. And it flies in the face both of physical mortality and of alternative norms. Cultural heritage involves replacement as well as retention. Destruction is not simply an atavistic or aberrant kind of pathological behavior to be outgrown; it is deeply embedded in human nature and society, part and parcel of economic and creative life.

Heritage suffers most conspicuous damage in time of war. The world weeps at the burning of Sarajevo's library, the bombing of Mostar's bridge. Global codes would prohibit the looting and sacking of combatants' heritage. They are all in vain. Heritage is destroyed and uprooted precisely *because* it shores up enemy will and self-regard. National and tribal iconoclasts will always transgress global preservation canons.

We are all iconoclasts, and not merely when at war. Heritage is ever jettisoned, whether because it is felt to outlive a present purpose, or to facilitate social transactions, or to engender new creations. "Everything for ceremonial, religious, and ritual purposes that my culture makes," says a Zuni spokesman, "is meant to disintegrate…to go back into the ground. Conservation is a disservice to my culture."*

As Zunis and Aborigines gain doctorates and become museum curators, archaeologists fondly hope such tribal views may give way to Western appreciation of artefacts' information content and aesthetic value. But these views are hardly less pervasive, if less confessed, in mainstream Western society, where disposability rules in building sites as in supermarkets. So pervasive is the urge to replace that New York City planners recently boasted of tearing down the most monumental old buildings in the world to make way for new ones. Instant evanescence is the stock-in-trade of producers and consumers geared to ever-speedier obsolescence, even of heritage.

* Edmund Ladd, 1992, quoted in C. Sease, "Codes of ethics for conservation," in *International Journal of Cultural Property*, 7:98–115, p. 106.

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FOREWORD

Dr. Suvit Yodmani
Executive Director
Asian Disaster Preparedness Center
Bangkok

Monuments from almost every culture have, for centuries, captured the imagination and awe of people. Apart from being imposing and beautiful, they are replete with value, and community pride. There is an entire world of decision-making which surrounds their conservation; however, it is usually disjointed and piecemeal: committees are formed to defend, maintain, and in some cases, rebuild them; funds are donated and allocated locally, collected internationally and expended critically when it works well and otherwise when not; institutions are set up to identify and create awareness about them; and multinational banks support conferences and seminars around the world to discuss them, establish policies regarding them, and dissuade the world's art market from destroying them. Unfortunately, historic urban settings in general – the communities of people who live around and in these historic buildings – do not receive the attention or support they deserve to maintain a vitality and quality characteristic of historic areas, to protect the integrity of their structures, and to stimulate local economies as populations, occupancy and economies change. Those programmes of conservation usually focus on documenting select structures; socio-cultural history receives a perfunctory nod, often to the exclusion of stories people tell which form part of a large jigsaw puzzle, and which we might call its "context".

The context of a historic urban area offers qualities that attract new populations, investors, tourists and resources to improve the existing housing stock and expand civic and basic services almost always vulnerable to erasure. The earthquakes of Bhuj, India, and Bam, Iran, are tragedies that need not have happened as they did. Had there been a recognition of the vulnerabilities of these historic places, actions might have been taken to save lives, property and local ways of living. How many more historic areas will we need to lose before national and local governments and the international community provide support for their retrofitting and their continued existence? How many more unique places will disappear and with them the examples of past skills, details and configurations which store lessons for the future?

It should be clear from the outset that we are dealing with living organisms. Obviously, historic places cannot be "frozen" in time, nor can we pretend that they remain constantly "alive". As they change, they must be encouraged to adapt within a set of performance guidelines that will recognize them as assets and resources for the future. To do that, development authorities in these towns, communities and cities need to review their vulnerabilities and take steps to mitigate probable disaster impacts. Part of the job entails carefully listening to people's stories, and collecting sometimes the most unlikely of material to support an argument.

Written in the aftermath of the 2001 earthquake in Kachchh, this book attempts to show policymakers and citizens in Bhuj that the planner can very well behave like an anthropologist in the field, and that he has a responsibility to listen to stories told to him by residents. The stories and pictures obtained of a city hit by a disaster will most likely become crucial to the reconstruction process. This takes time, and Tyabji's message is that such ethnographic fieldwork must be accounted for in a contractual process in which local governments who ask planning consultancies to develop plans to re-organise land and urban infrastructure require that they gather qualitative information more substantively. By interweaving an analysis of historic photographs with stories told to the author in interviews with residents over two and a half years, the book summarises a set of issues and insights which give us a better understanding of the development pattern of Bhuj over 450 years. Such fieldwork must be carried out in other disaster-hit areas around the world, and must become a part of the methods used by architects, urban planners and policymakers charged with the task of reconstructing cities and towns. Equally important would be to do this work before disaster strikes, for its own intrinsic value and for the significant contribution it can make to pro-active mitigation programs which historic urban areas need.

As a regional resource centre working towards disaster reduction for safer communities and sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific, the Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC), Bangkok, is particularly keen to support the methods and ideas proposed in this book. Committed to addressing all types of disasters and covering all aspects of the disaster management spectrum – from prevention and mitigation, through preparedness and response, to reconstruction and rehabilitation endeavours – ADPC continues to develop technical and methodological innovations in disaster risk management and to continually adapt its approach to more effectively accommodating the emerging needs of Asian countries. It is ADPC's hope that policymakers and citizens take the book's methods seriously in preparing for future mitigation and response to disasters, and that this compilation of stories, pictures and criticism will appeal to people in cities around the world, not only in Bhuj, since the scope of its message is undoubtedly universal.

Sarojbhai Shukl (b. 1931)

I have very vivid memories of my childhood in Bhuj. I remember watching my friends get about Bhuj's streets on roller skates, which you could buy for five *kories*. We students had to go to Bombay University to write our exams; I remember that Sarviben Joshi was the first girl to ever go to school in Bhuj – and that was as late as in my day! We had to wake up at five o'clock every morning to do our schoolwork, and then tend our cattle and buffaloes and help with housework. School went from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., and after that we played our street games, like *gilli danda*, *goli*, and *kodi*. And you could often find volleyball and cricket being played outside Mahadev Gate. My friends and I used to go on occasion to the Tapkeshwari Caves ouside the city, and I remember that people went there especially in the monsoons, when it was particularly beautiful up the hill.

We had our local brand of stories as children. There's the one about a local magician, Mohan, otherwise known as Mono. He was a very untidy sort, and with somewhat uneven powers. The story went that Mono's tricks would invariably fail in the company of other magicians, and there was always a twist to the tale about him. One day, he found himself in front of a sweetmeat shop, and asked the shopkeeper for a jalebi. When asked to pay first, Mono discovered to his embarrassment that he hadn't a single paisa on him, and slunk away. Later, the shopkeeper discovered to his consternation that entire plates of jalebis had magically disappeared…

But it wasn't always fun. I think we all suffered quite a bit during the Second World War. Everything had to be rationed, and Kutch stopped importing grain and cloth, which wasn't available for three years beginning in 1939. Many people survived on corn and red rice, using oil instead of kerosene to light their lamps

I can tell you that our city presented a completely different picture when I was young. Roads were rough, but were cleaned twice a day by the Municipality, which sprinkled water down every lane and cleaned very systematically. It was only after the Kutch State's merger

---

Maharao Khengarji III and the infant Madansinhji in an early Bentley, with their driver Jadavji Buddhbhatti at the wheel, photographed sometime in the early 1920s. Buddhbhatti's family went on to build a highly successful business as car mechanics and petrol pump owners.

Above: Kharsra Maidan, with the pavilion where royal *darbar*s or *kacheri*s took place during the Monarchy. Here, a royal party including Vikramsinghji of Narsinggadh gathers under a tent, while the public throngs a small, arched stone pavilion, visible left of centre, in the distance. Only a small portion of the pavilion remains today. See also p.221.

Below: The obstacle course at Kharsra, where competitors were required to squeeze through wooden drums, before racing on to the finish line.

with the Indian Union in 1948 that we saw a tar road develop between Mahadev Gate and Lalan College; I remember that the contract to construct it had been given to the Hindustan Construction Company in Karachi. In fact, this connection with Karachi went much deeper, because we regularly bought routine groceries such as potatoes, wheat, fruit and dry fruit from that city. It wasn't very far away, after all.

It was a fact that Nagar Brahmins were not supposed to eat anywhere outside the house, so *ganthia*-jalebi and onion were taboo for us. If you had a craving for such things, you had to slink away to the forest behind the Kagada-pith, or go to the Pavdi Ghat's terrace along the lakefront. You couldn't even eat in restaurants, and sometimes students escaped from classes for the day, appearing only towards evening to report to school!

That was one kind of tradition. I can also tell you about weddings and death, since I've been a priest marrying young couples for several decades now. People in Bhuj typically got married quite early, but in the Nagar tradition the bridegroom wore the same clothes for four days and the bride's party had to supply the groom's side with meals for all that time. The groom would have to be escorted borne on a *bajoth* to his in-laws' to bathe. Weddings, I remember, happened at home, not in community halls. Death was an equally elaborate ritual. Nagars were cremated along the banks of the Khari Nadi, while cremation spots for Rajgors were near Suralbhit. Pall bearers were ritually required to bathe, place a *chandla* on the forehead, and walk barefoot to the cremation site. And if you were delayed at dusk while returning from the cremation grounds outside, you had to have made sure that you had informed a policeman in advance to reopen the city's gates for you. Otherwise, you would end up spending the night locked out!

The gymnasium in Nagar Wandi, photographed probably around 1930. Community dinners used to be organized here on the occasion of a Nagar marriage or death. Nagar Wandi also hosted a number of visiting actors.

INTRODUCTION

The violence and calm of that morning could not have been more poignantly juxtaposed. In 2003, with bulldozer operators around me in Bhuj complaining noisily about the difficulty of carting away the stones of a city rent by an earthquake in 2001, I sat quietly piecing together a 19th-century panorama of photographs that had escaped my attention even after months of fieldwork in Bhuj (see pages 118–119). Composed beautifully sometime in the late 1870s, this extraordinary panorama depicted the entire sweep of Bhuj's historic lakefront against a late morning sun, its sepia romanticism replete with all manner of associations, and perhaps with – I thought – a serious message for me from behind its storied outlines. How different a picture it presented from the work of those machines outside.

It struck me, as I grappled that morning with my ideas, that my photograph should be seen as a serious and very temporal statement about a city's fragility; that it is a work of *intention* on its own, a highly critical inscription which marks a photographer's interpretation of his world. It reveals, through its architectural sweep, the rationales which govern the way a city should be designed, down to its very minutiae. Its photographer might well have been sensitive to the import of recording a slice of Bhuj as he went about unhurriedly composing his *mise en scène* that morning. I should use it, then, I thought, equally responsibly, as an instrument of critique to mirror or contrast the larger issues Bhuj is now facing in the aftermath of its collapse.

Surprisingly, although the scene in that photograph has not changed much in the intervening 150 years, its stillness becomes all the more poignant when compared with Bhuj's rapid transformation over the past forty years. Even by the time the earthquake occurred, Bhuj had grown ten-fold into a bustling town, with all of the problems typically attendant with city growth in India. Much of this urban transformation, we recall, has at the core of its motivations a public-sector attitude to planning, whose origins lie in the ideology of Nehruvian socialism. Owing to this, the city's development seems to have plodded unimaginatively along for decades, answerable largely to the wheels of bureaucracy. But Bhuj's complexion seemed to change markedly – *visually* – after India's economy opened up to capitalism in the early 1990s, when development began to be motivated by the compulsions of a real estate market and a powerful builder lobby.

The arguments for this book lie, unhappily, in the turbulent slipstream of such ideological shifts. In watching the idiosyncracies and drama of change unfold round me, I have often found myself asking serious questions about the value of my own research, questions which go beyond the art historical and ethnographic method to their practical application. When I first began work on it, this compilation of words and pictures had been intended for residents of the city to read as a pictorial catharsis, to make some sense of their hopelessly fractured world. My manuscript was to be solely a collage of interviews, with short segments on Bhuj's socio-political history by a clutch of contributing authors. Much later, as I continued thinking about how best to use our collaborative research, I decided that the book required a more

active voice and, indeed, a critical position. It seemed most relevant, then, to begin to distill larger ideas through the prism of historical and ethnographic fieldwork; ideas, I felt, about city change that should be deeply rooted in civic engagement and institutional reform.

This thinking has led to the book's essential advocacy. At one level, it aims to bring a subjective, abstract analysis of artefacts in Bhuj to bear on the problem of how one selects information necessary to making better decisions about what to conserve and what to let go, when a city is being so rapidly transformed. At another level, the book's project is to question people's civic engagement with the institutions that surround them, even as this transformation takes place. This second (far more challenging) problem dictated my very early decision to behave as an anthropologist would, moving lock, stock, and barrel to Bhuj for two years, and immersing myself in the psychology of the city's recovery.

And yet, my token gesture of activism remains just one of several, far more ambitious, exercises in contemporary grassroots engagement. In recent years, staccato efforts to encourage debates on public history have claimed the attention of newspapers. "Heritage walks" seem to have become the fashionable thing to do in cities and towns throughout the country. Energetic fora such as Partners for Urban Knowledge Action and Research (PUKAR) in Mumbai have begun to animate the vocabulary and rhetoric of urban theory, using the internet as a tool to rally support; and there is now, slowly, an emerging literature on the history and experience of cities in India, whose methods of comparative analysis offer prospects for a very powerful social critique.[1] Ethnography, however, as a means to critique institutions in the city – as an argument in favour of *better city design* – remains nascent, at best. Innumerable academic theses and community reports get written by well-intentioned scholars and NGOs, but such laudable anthropological exercises eventually have no practical effect on the nuts-and-bolts of urban development and physical change.

Which brings me to my motivations, both rational and intuitive, for this book.

Ethnography for planning

Experiments much like this piece of writing on a city's art, architecture and history can potentially become much larger civic exercises to engage people of all backgrounds in exercising their *choice*. In developed countries, particularly in the United States, work of this sort has long been a staple in building "social capital", even as such experiments reveal the malaise which lies beneath city living.[2] Such work has its benefits. Larger ethnographies of cities, supported by municipal governments and underwritten by corporate grants in a unique public-private partnership for civic engagement, could help to focus attention on the priorities of development and change, and clarify the very reasons why citizens should need urban planners in the first place. Seen from this perspective, an ethnography becomes a thought-provoking instrument of better governance, a tool with which to deconstruct and re-articulate the essential logic behind a society's needs.

A workshop with elderly residents, organized under a tent in Bhuj in 2001; this included a scheduled screening of historic photographs of Bhuj. Residents were invited to identify and interpret them, with the aim of creating a permanent record that would be useful in future to residents and town planners.

And what relevance does ethnography and the analysis of art and architecture have to planning practice? If planners, contracted by government, were required to spend enough time with local residents, unconventionally building pictorial and narrative portraits of the city, they might hit upon unstated aspirations and memories that should, ideally, be at the kernel of decision-making about the actual *nature* of change.

However, as it stands, planners' immersion in the field carries with it suspect notions of political activism; what the disciplines of social work and anthropology have been doing for years has still to be acknowledged by consultancy firms in the lucrative market for private-sector planning in India, as a serious scientific complement to the technicalities of urban planning. Current-day planning practice in India understandably pays scant attention to the need for planners to immerse themselves in the field: ethnographic fieldwork tends to be expensive, and private-sector planning contracts are scarcely designed to accommodate the luxury of field research beyond the conventions of scheduled, qualitative and quantitative "data-gathering". This is perhaps the greatest blind spot in urban planning. While there is a growing realization in the social sector of a need for cultural immersion, there are ample grounds for reform in planning practice as well.[3] Were progressive, socio-scientific thinking to be applied to the institutional mechanism of mainstream urban planning practice, the prospects for change could be enormous. This is all the more necessary in a country where the problems of basic infrastructure ("*roti, kapda aur makaan*", or "food, clothing and shelter") are at the core of the country's development challenge.

Immersion of this sort, however, needs legal backing. Current-day urban legislation provides no framework for "participatory" urban planning.[4] If fieldwork, legislated by an act, were to be used as a method to prepare statutory documents in planning, over and beyond the formal "consultation" that has become the planner's quick tool, its legitimation by law would help considerably to capture crucial information about places, and to build far more detailed portraits of the city than a statutory development plan currently requires. It is here that a true dialogue between, for example, heritage conservationists and development professionals could emerge.

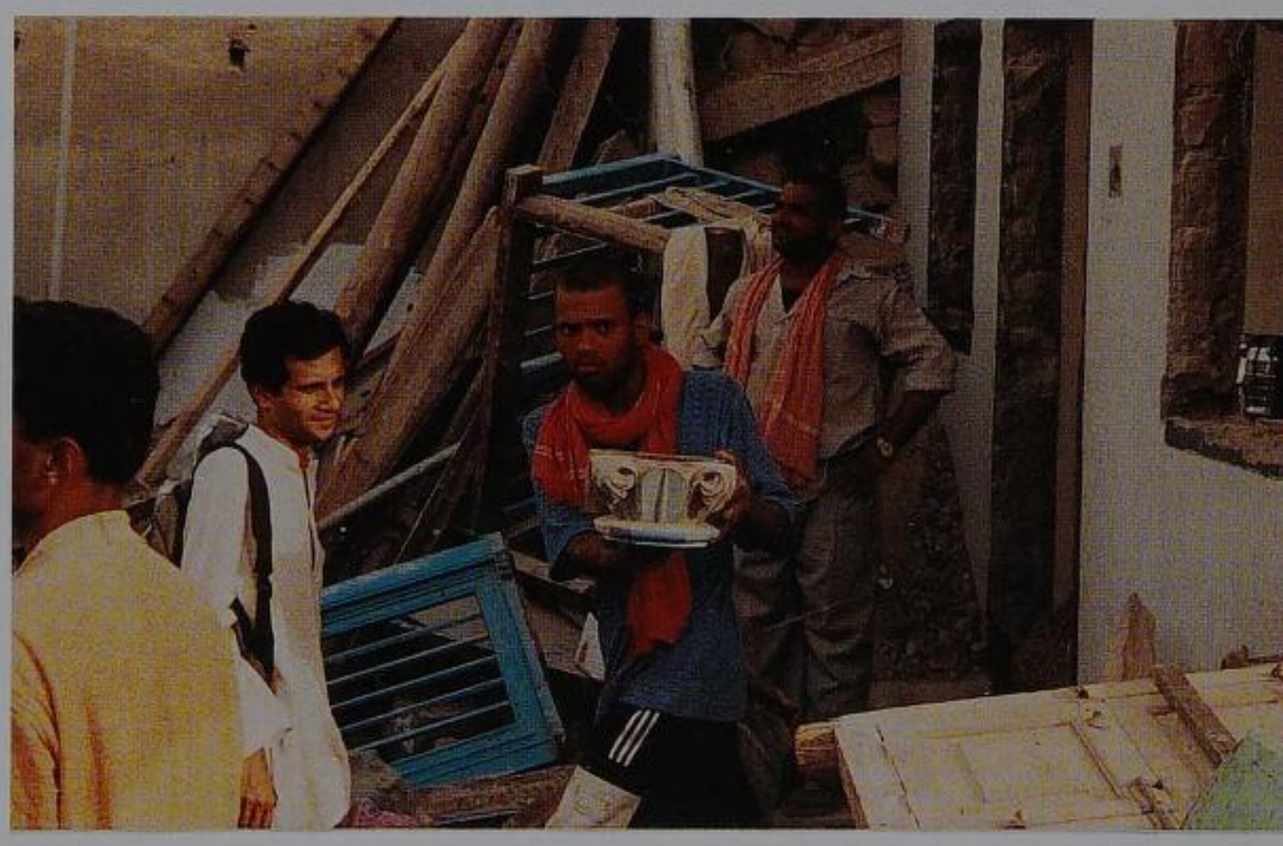
If budgets for urban planning, prepared by local governments or proposed by private planning consultancies bidding for projects, were designed to actually accommodate periods of cultural

immersion prior to drafting planning proposals, valuable time and effort could be saved by policy-makers in drafting development proposals in the long term. Changes in contractual structuring may, in the larger scheme of things, address that abstract bogey we call urban institutional reform. By going beyond the quick "consultation" to "embedding" themselves in a neighbourhood, planners might produce sharper statements about community needs, and build more trust between their constituencies and themselves.

The trauma of erasure

One important motivation behind this book has been my own deeply personal, painful experience of watching Bhuj's architectural heritage disappear, and feeling absolutely helpless in watching so much of it go during the first few weeks after the earthquake, when late-night robbers and art dealers began the systematic work of stripping the Old City of its valuable artefacts. Corruption drove even rubble-removing contractors to extremes, the earthquake appearing to have galvanized an entire art underworld into motion, over which many of us concerned about the Old City had no control. Common knowledge in Bhuj was that art dealers had sent scouts round the city to identify historic buildings with architectural elements ready for the taking; and that, in the very early hours of the morning, those very buildings would be surgically stripped of their fenestration, their artefacts loaded onto lorries to be carted away to points as far as Delhi and Mumbai. The dubious "clientele" for these products even included well-known restaurateurs and interior designers without the slightest scruples about these articles' provenance or their local significance, but who unashamedly took advantage of ordinary residents too dazed by the unreality of disaster and the unlikely prospect of reconstruction to care about their heirlooms.

I was offered a conciliatory Coca-Cola by crafty rubble-removing site contractors and crane operators even as I tried, with support from Praveen Pardeshi (UNDP Gujarat Programme Manager), to organize workshops in Bhuj to train them to be more sensitive to the city's historic buildings. Yet, they went about their work convincing residents to sell off their valuable rubble for a pittance, or to simply stand aside while a rubble-removing contractor bulldozed their historic houses without permission. A *Kachchh Mitra* reporter and I drove around the city's residential neighbourhoods taking pictures of the looting that had continued from historic houses in Vaniawad and Soniwad, each already



The confidence with which rubble-removing contractors coerced residents into parting with their heirlooms at extremely low prices was remarkable. Many historic buildings have been dismantled, shipped and sold openly on the antique market in Bhuj, and in cities like Delhi and Mumbai. 2001.

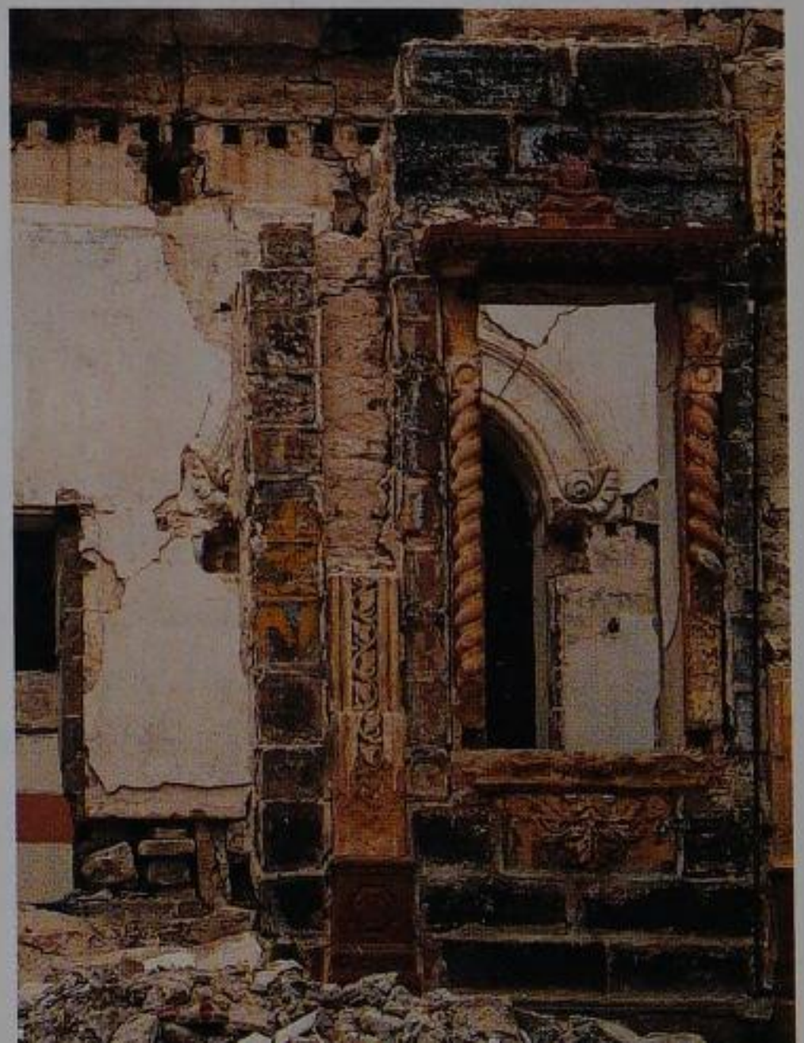
stripped clean of every iota of valuable ornaments several months after the disaster; it was as though looters still saw value in ripping apart the bare bones of a skeleton.

This erasure has produced a deeply troubling politics to do with interpreting historic photographs. I was asked by local politicians, on two occasions, to steer my conclusions about the content of this book's pictures in directions that would agree with political ideologies of the day, for them to ostensibly use it as a platform from which to argue ideas about Bhuj's historical formation. There were occasions when I was summarily dismissed by residents as being such an outsider to the reality of life and history in Bhuj that I could never possibly hope to portray ideas and emotions basic to understanding the place. And, finally, there were occasions when property developers, asked to comment upon development trends in the city, shied away from talking about the exact reasons why historic buildings had been torn down to make way for high-rise structures in the walled city in the 1970s.

Recently, the Gujarat State Government uncovered a well-orchestrated financial scam to do with rubble removal and which had involved crores of rupees, and the same contractors who once laughed at me in Soniwad later found themselves under legal scrutiny. Whether they will be put to proper justice or not is another matter altogether, but their infractions throw up entirely new, thought-provoking, brave questions. Can a city's cultural heritage be completely recalled and preserved in the aftermath of a disaster? How does one choose what to conserve? Is clandestine art dealership always reprehensible? Or is there perhaps some value to be gained from destruction, deliberate erasure, and the commodification of culture in the process of redevelopment? Since cities have often, in the history of civilization, been reborn from the ashes of older layers (think of Delhi, Jericho, Jerusalem and London), why should we hope to keep Bhuj's old city pristine and untouched by the imprint, if not outright scars, of deliberate change?

Below left: A late–19th century house, in Vaniawad.

Below right: Although architects from the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) painted a yellow mark on the building's facade, it still fell prey to vandals in the weeks after the earthquake in 2001.



POLITICS, PATRONAGE AND THE CITY

With contributions from
Umiyashankar Ajani, Naresh Antani,
Haresh Dholakia, K. S. Dilipsinhji,
Prangiriji Goswamy, Rahamtulla Jamadar,
Pramod Jethi, Prabodh Mankad,
Praveenbhai Shah, Kiran Vaghela,
and Dilipbhai Vaidya

With a little historical sleuthing, and a pinch of speculation, we could unearth some fascinating connections between the political and cultural history of the city of Bhuj and the way it has grown over four hundred years. We could ask ourselves questions about how urban development becomes a useful *prism* through which to review the work of kings and commoners, and to consider just how all this history might be relevant to the challenge of reconstructing Bhuj in the years to come.

Gauging patterns of Bhuj's early urban development and expansion is essentially a matter of detective work and conjecture, since there are very few available surviving records from which to piece together a complete story.[5] By combining all sorts of evidence – photographic, ethnographic, and literary – it will be possible to reconstruct the vast picture of a city now irrevocably changed after the earthquake of 2001. What follows in this chapter is not an encyclopaedic narration of Bhuj's political history, but a quick glimpse of the defining moments that have shaped it politically and physically over the years.

Khengarji I (1511–1585). Study in pencil, possibly late 19th century and from an earlier work, Kutch.

The first people, the first streets

The history of Bhuj's development begins with a nod to popular legend. It is said that Rao Khengarji I (1510–1585) arrived at the periphery of present-day Hamirsar Lake, close to where Uplipal Road meets Pareshwar Chowk today.[6] A shepherd named Hamir is reputed to have dug a small pond for his animals, and to have demanded – even as Khengarji had designs on developing a surrounding settlement – that the pond remain in his possession. Today, the Hamirsar assumes a central place in the city's creation myth, and is at the core of all popular explanations of the pattern of development to come.[7] As Khengarji's little settlement developed over a hundred-year period, Bhuj's social complexion continually changed with the arrival of more and more people who would monopolize the supply of specialized goods and services to prosper financially. The early settlement probably boasted a small market street, connecting temples and mosques (Shiromanirai and Trikamrai temples and the Minara Mosque on Saraf Bazaar) in a straight line not far from the pond, since commercial activity could easily grow

around places of worship.[8] To supply the small settlement with water, Khengarji oversaw the construction of small reservoirs around the pond. Could the first city limits of Bhuj have been off Pareshwar Chowk where the Sitla Mata Temple currently stands? Tradition has it that a temple to the goddess Sitla must always be situated outside the bounds of a village and to its south. The Sitla Mata Temple is the oldest in Bhuj, and this theory would support its location.[9] Another residual marker denoting the city's earliest historic limit may be the small shrine to Bhuthnath within the confines of the Mekan Temple off Nagar Chakla. Bhuthnath is believed to inhabit cemeteries; and, residents believe, since cemeteries usually develop at the edge of cities, this may be an instance where the small, growing settlement engulfed its peripheral developments so that these now appear to be at the old city's centre.

Another intriguing idea about Bhuj's early development revolves around the notion of water – a scarce resource in Kachchh – as a kind of conceptual strategy to building the city and deciding its street and neighbourhood patterns.[10] It is, of course, difficult to prove this, but several local residents have analysed and written over the years about Bhuj's probable growth; speculation always tends to take on a mythology of its own, and in this case there may be a grain of truth in it. Certainly, many residents remember that there was considerably more water in the Old City in their youth than there is today, and that these sources of water either dried up or were simply plastered over in the 1960s and 1970s, when urban development stepped up, eclipsing old neighbourhoods and small catchments in the quest to find more space for more people.

The Shiromani Rai temple sanctuary witnessed considerable destruction in the 2001 earthquake.

There are several theories concerning water, including the idea that there may have been a sizeable pond adjacent to the *Raghunaathji-no-aaro*, and that on Panchmukha Hanuman Street there may have been several smaller ponds. It is possible that the etymology of street names supports this theory. The idea is certainly tempting: a lane off Vaida Dela is called "Talav" (meaning "lake") Sheri; and the area between the Mekan Temple and Chhachh Falia is known as "Vokla", implying that water must have flowed through there during the monsoons every year. Moreover, the road which leads from the Darbargarh to Sarpat Gate via Mal Sheri may also mark the route of an old water channel, since it culminates in Paburai Street, which shares its name with a reservoir nearby, and where – prior to the 2001 earthquake – it was necessary to step down a flight of stairs into the entrances of houses.[11] The overall conclusion, from this sort of analysis, might be that much of the area covered between the Raghunaathji Temple and Bhujiyo Hill was at one time a concave depression, and that development in Bhuj's earliest years may have amounted to some degree of land reclamation.

And there is a social dimension to this development as well.[12] The people who arrived in Bhuj over two centuries – from when Khengarji had first settled Bhuj in the mid-16th century to the mid-18th century – may have concerned themselves with building an occupational relationship with the monarchy, their richest and most obvious financial patron. Nagar Brahmins and Banias, therefore, probably became the intellectual elite to the Raos of Kutch, attendants at the royal court in roles they would play well into the 20th century; while the first Maheshwaris busied themselves in trade. Lohars, blacksmiths by profession, might have begun producing weaponry to stock successive Raos' troops and body-guards. Animal herders may have converged on Bhuj to tend to the royal heads of cattle, arriving possibly from places such as the village of Dador, renowned for animal husbandry, and located on the fringe of the Banni grasslands. They may have included the first of the Theba and Thappa herder communities who would go on to serve Bhuj's cattle-herding business for generations afterward. Carpenters could have arrived to build chariots for the Raos,

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A Nagar from Kutch. Pen-and-ink on paper, possibly late 19th century.

and a community of stable hands was perhaps employed to care for the Raos' mounted regiments.[13]

Rao Khengarji I and Rao Bharmalji (1586–1632) both began employing *siddi* soldiers – recruits from Abyssinia and East Africa – as bodyguards, in addition to recruiting Turkish, Mughul, Arab, and Pathan soldiers who came to Bhuj as mercenaries and were positioned towards the periphery of the Old City. These soldiers complemented the work of the Rajput *darbar* community, who would go on to develop Rajput Falia and Rajgor Vitha Falia.[14] The Jethi wrestling community was contracted as bodyguards to the king and eventually housed itself in Jethi Mal Falia east of the royal complex of apartments, now known as the Darbargarh. The Khawaas people were mercenaries and menials who would eventually come to occupy an area now known as Khawaas-*vala-dela*, located adjacent to Lungha Sheri. At some point, members of the Baqaali Muslim community of farmers would have arrived to tend to the Rao's vegetable gardens, settling in the area against the northern edge of Hamirsar pond.[15] Even to this day, interestingly, the community's descendents continue to tend the Sharad Bagh Palace's nurseries and gardens.

As more and more people descended upon the city, four kinds of development seem to have occurred to consolidate the town of Bhuj and shape it roughly in its present form. We can only infer such development in the absence of a conclusive record.

The first, rather ambitious, stage probably began with Khengarji ordering the expansion and strengthening of the pond around which his settlement had originally taken place. Hamir's pond slowly became the Hamirsar, ringed with retaining walls which have since witnessed several attempts at restoration and rebuilding. To construct this larger lake, the Rao proved visionary in recruiting water engineers to conceive a network of wells and underground cisterns which routed water from the Khari River to the city through a complex network of underground water channels, many of which have since disappeared, victim to the pressures of 20th-century urban development. Fortunately, several remnants of this system remain, including twenty-two wells in Rawal Wadi behind Mochirai in the village of Mirzapar; Kalyaneshwar-*vav* opposite the Kalyaneshwar Temple close to the Hamirsar's edge (see page 30); Mota-pir-*vav*; and Bhujia-*vav*.

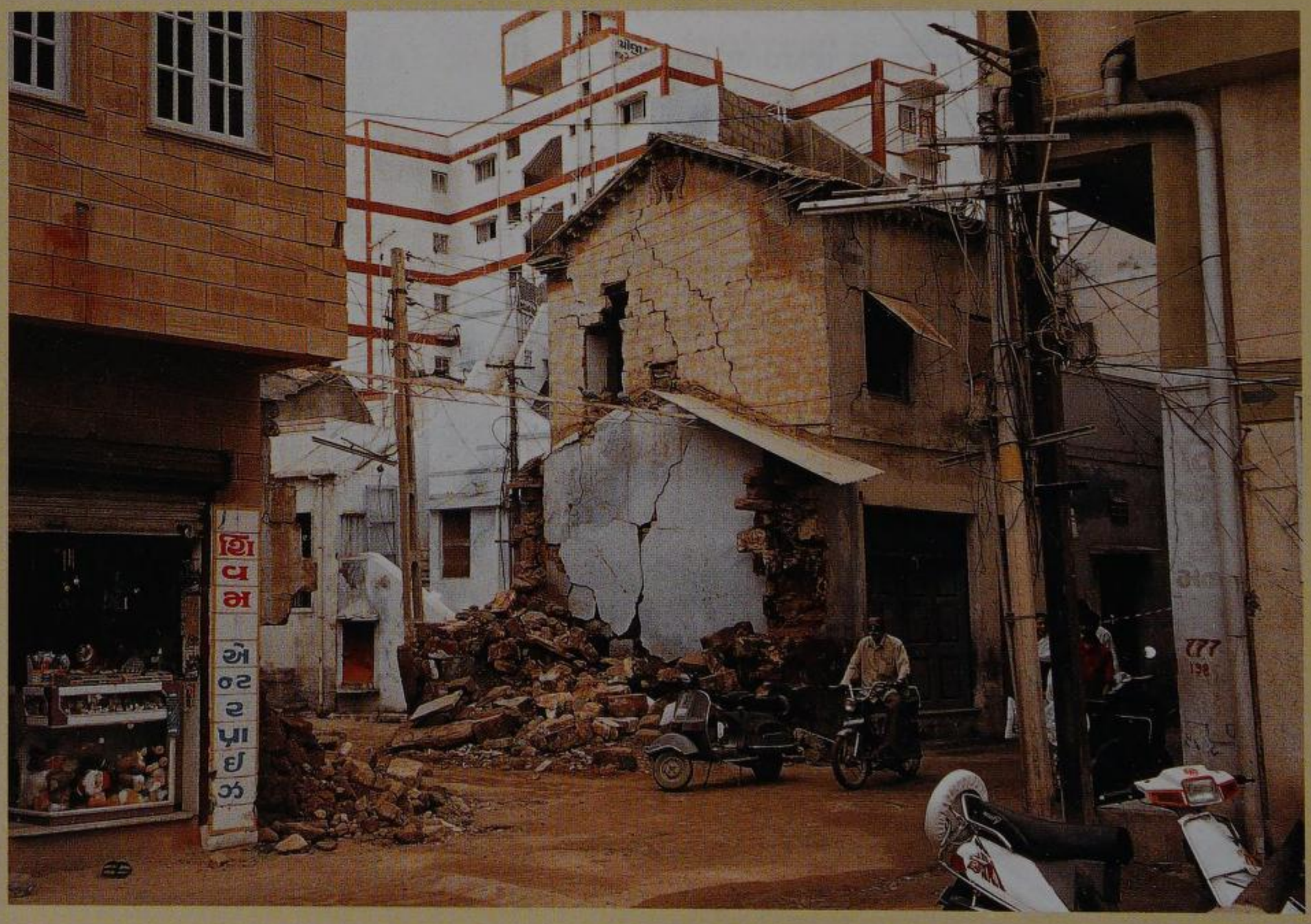
Subsequently, the Rao may have imported *salaat* builders from Jamnagar (see "A Collaborative Canvas") and Gurjar *suthaar*s (carpenters) to build a complex of apartments for himself not far from the Hamirsar, and adjacent to the market street.[16] (see pages 168-178) While it is possible that this architectural complex was one of the first major acts of building Bhuj, it is more likely that the historic Darbargarh began as humble temporary quarters around the *khili pujan sthan* until the Rao had acquired a quantum army of labourers to undertake the massive construction of a permanent palace compound.

Prabodh Mankad (b. 1930)

I used to work as a gutter inspector for Bhuj Municipality prior to Independence, and part of my job involved surveying every single drain in the old city. This took me to all corners of the town, and I had to deal with a number of very different people – with the result that I began to interest myself in the different communities who've lived in the city. I've written a lot about – but never published – an etymology of place names in Bhuj; that is, how a *falia* or a *sheri* got its name, and why.

A few places in Bhuj strike me as most interesting. Some of these have to do with our old ways of life, or a particular geographic characteristic unique to that part of town. Do you know how Divetia Sheri was named? The word *divetia* comes from the word *divet*, which means "wick" in Gujarati. People who made the wicks for street lamps in the mid- to late–19th century used to live in a particular area not far from the Old Vegetable Market between Sanchora Sheri and the Chowk Falia area, and the lamps on this particular street were the very first to be lit every evening in the old city. It is now called Dr. Bhanji Street. Another street was called Vokla Sheri, and is named so because it intentionally follows the city's run-off route for stormwater after heavy rains; it is believed that Vokla Sheri was designed specifically to guard against floods, which is why perhaps the areas surrounding the southern portion of Hamirsar Lake do not get flooded after the rains and houses seem intentionally poised on higher ground.

Entrance to the Vora-saat-*no*-*delo*, from Dr. Mehta Road in Bhuj's walled city.



Other places in Bhuj are named to commemorate historical events, famous people, or entire communities. One of Bhuj's oldest and most traditional *falia*s is called the Vora-saat-*no-delo*, located just off Talav Sheri. This little *falia* – which has changed considerably over the centuries but whose basic shape remains unchanged even after the earthquake and the work of demolition – was built in the late 1500s by Maharao Khengarji I's sister, Kamaaba, who married the soldier-administrator Mahmud Begada of Ahmedabad, and who was granted royal quarters adjacent to where the King's courtbearers, the Nagar Brahmins, used to live. Kamaaba would stay in the *delo* whenever she visited Bhuj, which was reputedly quite often. It is said in the Nagar histories that the land here was granted to her by her brother. Later in life, she came to live permanently in Bhuj, bringing with her a royal retinue of servants, including her *kamdar*, or keeper of her household (hence, Kamdar Falia adjacent to the Vora-saat-*no-delo*). The exact meaning of *Vora saat* is debatable; we now think that the *dela* was given to Nagar Voras possibly after Kamaaba's death. According to another version, the *kamdar* was given the title *Shree Saat*, and the neighbourhood's name is a subsequent corruption of this. Finally, only about forty years ago, the reputed civil engineer P.K. Vora came to live along this street and its name changed again to *Vora-sahib-no-delo* with respect to him!

The well-known Talav Sheri off Uplipal Street is sometimes also called Dr. Mehta Street. There was once a Medhawala Gopalji Jetha Mehta who lived there; he was a *karbhari* to Rao Deshalji, in the 1860s, and the surprising thing is that he was not a Jain but a Nagar Brahmin, and something of a scholar who is reputed to have written the first novel in Gujarati, *Karan Ghelo*, in his office at the Old Municipality building, which is still in Nana Vokla Street. It was once customary for Nagars to prefix their names with the word "Mehta". Gopalji Jetha's name was suffixed with "Ghoda", but in time he lost a suffix and gained a prefix!

A young lady at the Kutch court, photographed in the 1870s. It was rare for women to be photographed at the time that this image was captured. Several descriptive portraits were taken of her, and she is heavily bejewelled and dressed in an expensive brocade *odhni* which may have originated from Ahmedabad or Varanasi, with Mochi embroidery on the *ghaghra*. Only the royal family were allowed to wear gold on the feet, which is perhaps why she might be a member of the zenana.

Some neighbourhoods were named after a specific trade. Lungha Sheri, for instance, housed the famed Lungha community of Muslim musicians, who had performed every morning–ever since the art-loving Maharao Lakhpatji patronized their community in the mid-1700s–at the Darbargarh's *nagaara khana* (the main gate) to announce a new day. They did this for three hundred years, playing the *dhol-sharanai* at 4 or 5 a.m. We used to call their performances *choghadias*. Each *choghadia* lasted about twenty minutes, and once the King had awakened the *choghadia* turned into a classical raga exposition. Lungha musicians also performed seated in the *delo* of the famed Jain *derasar* in Kothara, but none survive to do this any more. Machhi Pith, the neighbourhood east of Jethi Sheri, was where fish and meat used to be sold; Bhatia Sheri housed the enterprising Bhatia community, who dealt in imports and exports on the sea routes to the Middle East and China.

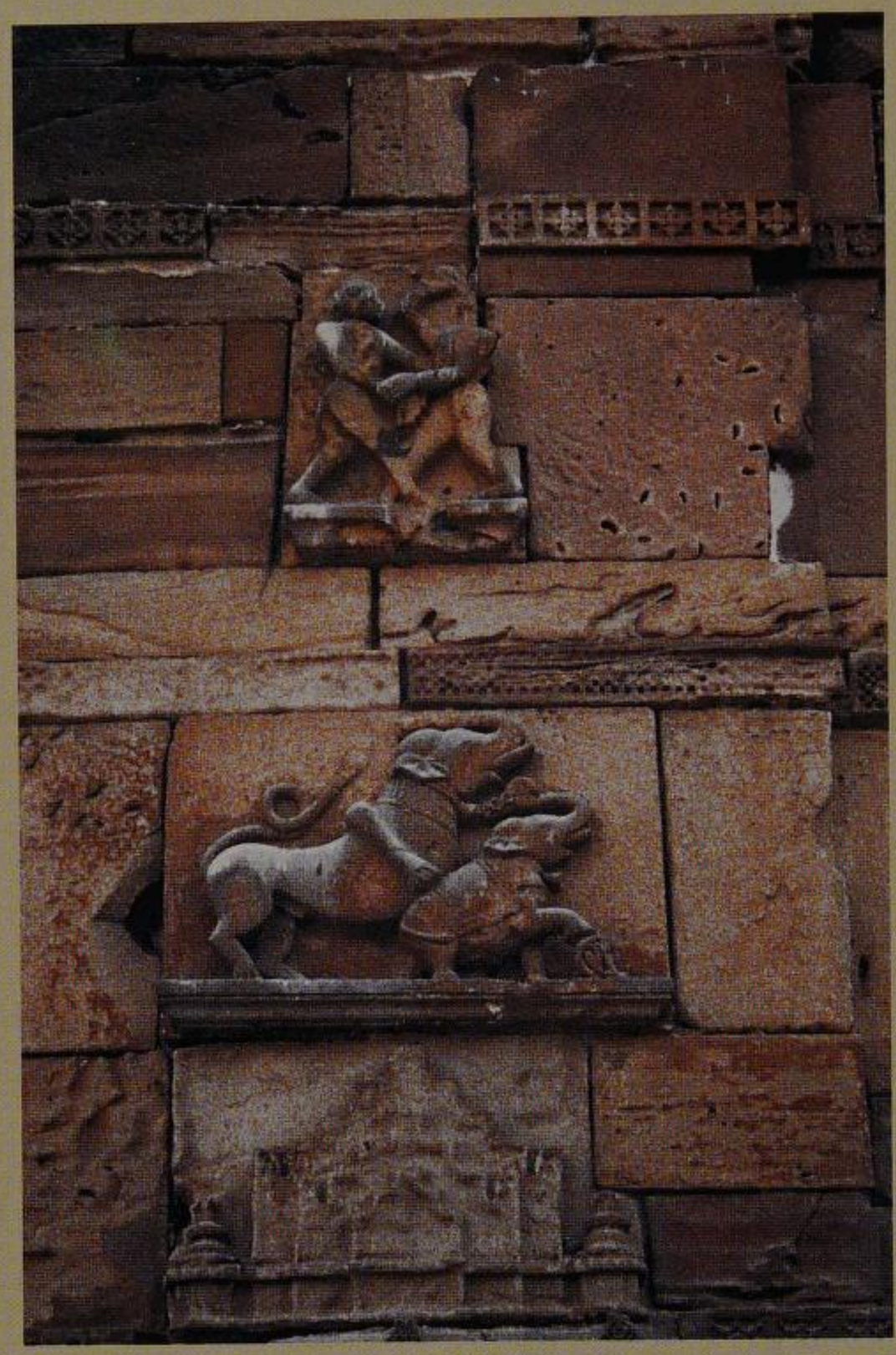
Maniar Falia, located next to Haveli Falia, is named after the once-famous ivory-carver *maniar* community of Bhuj, whose art was once patronized by the Maharaos in Bhuj.

Salaat Falia was populated by the traditional (Hindu) *salaat* builder community. They, along with their (Muslim) *manjothiya* brethren from Bhuj (who lived on Manjothiya Sheri off Bhid Chowk), were the true architects of Bhuj for four hundred years, building the city's houses and its administrative centre.

Jethi Mal Falia was named so because it housed a community of *jasti-mals*, professional wrestlers and bodyguards to the king. Kamaagar Falia was famous at one time for its *kamaagar* artists, but no one knows that the word *kamaagar* is actually derived from *kamaan*, the word for "bow". Specialists in the production of bow-and-arrows, the *kamaagar*

Above: The front elevation of the Nagaara Khana gate to the Darbargarh, Bhuj. Lungha musicians performed on the *shehnai* (a clarinet-like instrument) and *nagaara* or *dhol* (a double-sided drum) in a room on the gate's upper story, at five o'clock every morning, to wake the Maharao.

Facing page: Bhid Chabutara, photographed c. 1890.



A stone frieze on the 17th-century Bhid Gate depicts Jastimal *pahalvaans*, wrestlers, at the Maharao's court up until the late 19th century. Compare this with page 92.

community were the original forgers of weaponry to the Maharao's army, and perhaps this is why they initially settled adjacent to the Vala Khawaas Falia, Rajput Falia (the soldiers' quarters) and Lohaar Chakla, where the blacksmiths (ancestors of the present-day Lohana community) lived. Later, they became famous for their *kamaagari* paintings, which still adorn the interior walls of many Jain Vania houses in Bhuj and Mandvi. The Mandalia *bania* trading community lived in Mandalia Street, doing administrative work; although they may also have stocked pots and pans made by *kansaras* (metalworkers) living in Kansara Bazaar.

From Bhuj's very beginning, cattle have been considered an asset – *gau dhan*. Your worth was measured in terms of the number of cattle you owned, perhaps one reason why every Kachchhi house once featured a *gau shala*, something you will clearly see even in the modern-day houses of Madhapar; cattle once constituted a major part of a bride's *trousseau*. For generations, cattleherders used to live around the Ashapura Temple, behind Sejwala Matam, selling milk to the rest of the city, and the street came to be known as Gau Dhan Sheri. In time, the *gau* was dropped, and we now simply call this street Dhan Sheri.

The Panch Hatdi crossing, not far from the historic Patwadi Gate, was named after five shops which I remember visiting in the mid-1940s (a *paan* shop from those days had survived until it was demolished after the earthquake). A whole community of people decided to settle around these five shops because they offered all the conveniences of daily life! You could buy a packet of masala containing all the essential spices for cooking in one go, which was a novelty in my day.

Another very interesting place with a unique history is the old Moti Poshal *jagir*; Moti Poshal Sheri is in Danda Bazaar, although the street is now unrecognizable. The *jagir* building dates back to the early 1800s, but the earthquake destroyed it, and only one of

Portrait of a Brahmin priest from the royal household of Kutch, seated before a Mochi-embroidered ceremonial cloth. Suspended behind him is a cloth embroidered with zardozi.

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its arches remains standing. Bhadra Merji, a Jain priest and astrologer, lived in the Moti Poshal in the late 19th century, and was known to wear special clothes made by the community of Mochi embroiderers on Mochi Street, clothing which indicated how close he was to the Royal Family. He had blessed Khengarji III on his birth. His descendents are known as *gorji*s, or titular tutors to the royal family.

Above: The gate to the Kalyaneshwar Mahadev Temple, Bhuj, c. 1550. This temple was constructed by Zhala Mansinghji of Dhrangadhra, Gujarat, who is said to have lived previous to Rao Khengarji I. According to a folk tale, Kalyansingh, paternal uncle to Rao Bhara and resident in Koth Gangad village in Dholka District near Ahmedabad, accompanied Khengarji I to Kutch. The Rao's children had all died at childbirth, and so his uncle and he were very concerned about an heir. One of his cattle had just recently delivered a calf, but its udders always seemed barren. Kalyansinghji scolded the cowherd about this, and found out in doing so that neither he nor his men had ever milked a newly delivered cow. Investigations on how to milk her began and they saw that her udders would flow whenever she approached a clump of shrubs. The cowherd reported this to Kalyansinghji. He confirmed the tale and dug the place up, only to find a Shiva linga there. The next day, an ascetic sat himself next to it. Kalyansinghji introduced himself to the ascetic and asked for his help in assuaging his nephew, the Rao's, problems. The ascetic is said to have performed magical rituals and the Rao's wife finally gave birth to an heir. The child survived and was named Jiyaji. In quick succession, the queen gave birth to six other princes, in gratitude for whom the Rao built a temple where the ascetic had sat and named it after his uncle – Kalyaneshwar. The temple is reputed to be about 400 to 425 years old.

Left: Kalyaneshwar-*vav*, opposite Kalyaneshwar Temple, Bhuj, circa 1550. Probably one of Khengarji I's first few water networking projects, the *vav* today is continually threatened by passing traffic and adjacent development.

The Gothic Revival tower and apartments of the Prag Mahal, built in the late 1800s, photographed in 1942 on the occasion of Kumar Shri Joravarsinhji of Kutch's wedding with Ba Shri Sushilkunvarba of Banera. The photograph could have been taken either from the Ashapura Temple's *nagaara khana*, or from Kotha-*vav*, which supplied the Aina Mahal with water for its fountains, or from the roof of the Naniba Kanyashala in Patwadi. Beyond the wall at far left is the Man Vilas Palace.

Next, Saraf Bazaar's permanent outline may have been cemented by Lohanas and Banias, who slowly built neighbourhoods such as Dhatia Falia, Bhid Falia, and Vania-*na-dela* adjacent to the market street, hedging their neighbourhoods against what was later to become the bazaar's street edge.

Finally, as the town's population swelled and the older southern edge of the city took on an established Nagar Brahmin and Vania identity, development may have pushed northward. The northern peripheries of the city, now characterized by Soniwad and Paburai Falia, started to accommodate the Grimani Soni and Parejia Soni clans, who would go on to set up businesses as silversmiths in Saraf Bazaar. An intriguing fact is that Paburai Chowk was once the site of a pond which dried up in the mid-19th century due to excessive development and was eventually filled in over successive generations.

The further urban development of Bhuj must be viewed against the backdrop of the next two hundred years, during which political upheavals distracted Kutch rulers from the project of urban development. This explains perhaps why there were few, if any, official development

Godji I, from a late–18th century painting in the Aina Mahal, Bhuj. He wears a *patka*, a popular medium of decorative expression worn by members of the aristocracy.

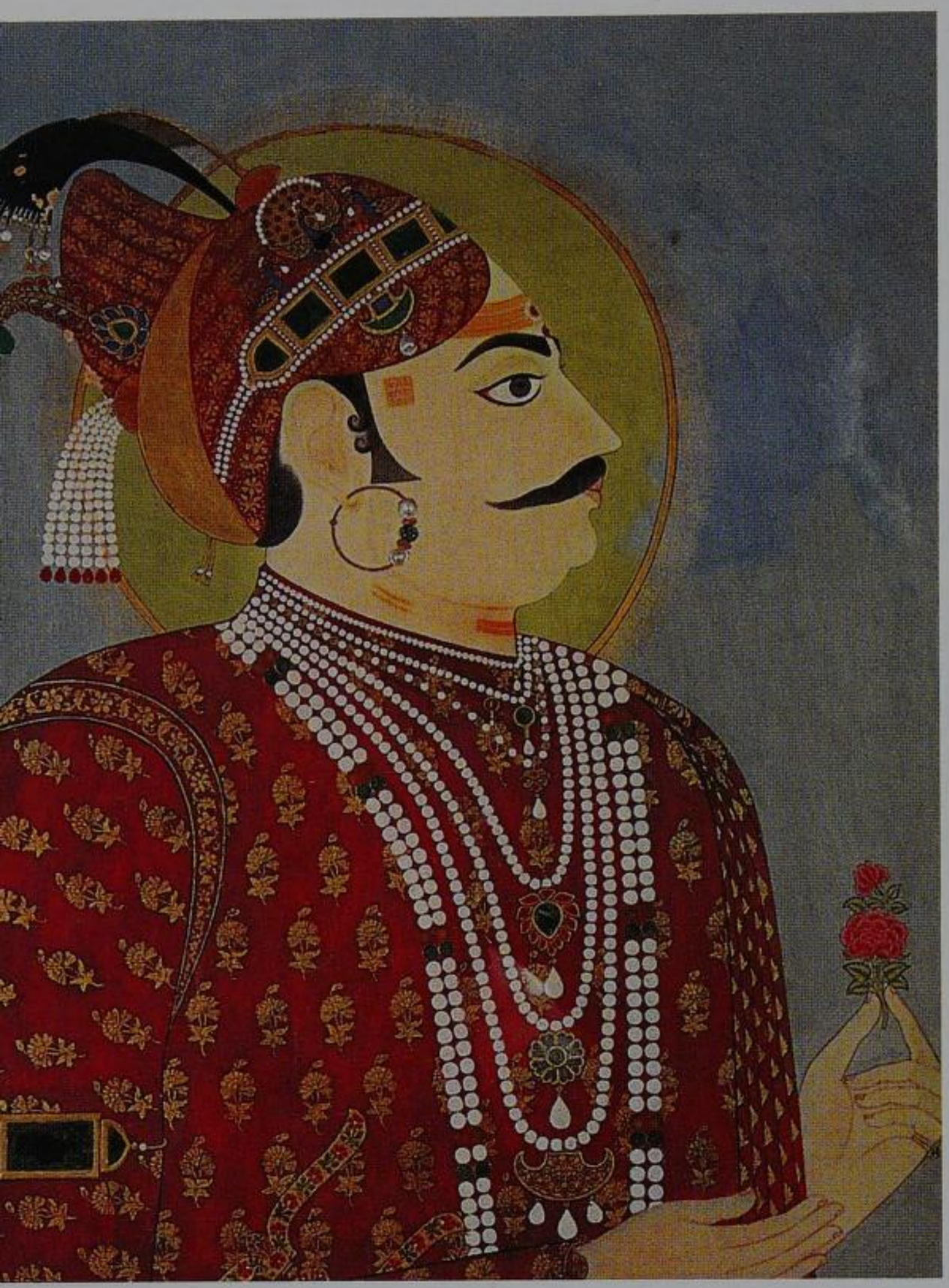
commissions in the roughly one hundred years following Khengarji I's death in 1585. The end of his reign signalled an end to the state's relative independence from the Mughal Empire. The Ahmedabad Sultanate soon made it compulsory for Bhuj to pay a tribute of five thousand horses to the Mughal Court every year. Emperor Jehangir visited Ahmedabad in 1617 and was offered expensive gifts by Khengarji's successor, Rao Bharmal, at which he is said to have been pleased and waived the Rao's annual tribute, giving Kutch the freedom to coin its own currency. Rao Bharmal then built a treasury (demolished after the 2001 earthquake) outside the Darbargarh in the year 1623, and the region's economy began to thrive. Kutch's single currency continued even during the British occupation, and lasted in circulation until 1948, when the princely state merged with the Indian Union.

Patrons of art and economy

It was not until almost a hundred years after Rao Bharmal's death that Kutch witnessed significant urban growth, sparked by Maharao Godji (1715–1719) who sponsored the development of many new towns in Kutch. But his successor, Deshalji I, is credited more with the project of building Bhuj. During his reign from 1719 to 1741, the new Maharao developed agriculture and established a system of central government in the region, politically consolidating all the *bhayad*s in the region. His name would go down in popular narrative as the "Deshra Parmeshra" of Kutch State.

Deshalji I's most visible contribution to Bhuj's topography was his sponsorship of the city's outer fortifications, otherwise known as Alamgarh, constructed in 1729.[17] His other significant project, Desalsar Lake, northwest of the walled city, would extend the network of water channels and reservoirs begun by his predecessor Khengarji I. But it is Deshalji's successor, Maharao Lakhpatji (1741–1760), who is probably best remembered for his considerable patronage of the arts, and the active interest he took in the city's insti-

Maharao Lakhpatji and Maharao Godji I, from a late–18th century painting in the Aina Mahal, Bhuj.



Maharao Lakhpatji, from a late–18th century painting in the Aina Mahal, Bhuj

tutional and architectural development. Lakhpatji's reign left an indelible imprint on Bhuj's cultural and economic landscape, and contributed greatly to influencing the course of the city's shape. Under his rule, foreign trade, shipping, handicrafts, literature, and the performing arts flourished, and an architectural style developed that would be copied and refined from house to house in the old city and in several towns around the region. In much the same manner as Emperor Akbar had done in North and Central India, Maharao Lakhpatji actively encouraged artists and poets as professionals, building local institutions such as the Brijbhasha Pathshala, a school for poetry and rhetoric, into a tour de force of cultural achievement.[18]

Lakhpatji is also perhaps best associated with the artisan Ramsingh Malam, a local mason who – the story goes – was once shipwrecked off the coast of Kutch, rescued by a passing Dutch frigate, and subsequently transported to Holland where he spent the next eighteen years acquiring a whole host of craft skills, including the incongruous arts of Venetian chandelier-making, printmaking and illustration, mirror-work, clockmaking, Dutch ceramic tile production, and relief sculpture, which he brought back with him to Kutch. Under Ramsingh Malam's guidance, the Aina Mahal was constructed with marble walls adorned with gold lace and glass pieces and works of art commissioned or acquired both in Kachchh and in Europe. Something of a *littérateur* himself,[19] Lakhpatji established a school to teach the language of Brij bhasha, where instruction to royal bards and scholars from afar extended, through language, to imparting a thoroughly classical knowledge to poets and writers.

In Bhuj, the skills of painting, *nakshi kaam* (engraving on gold and silver), *meena kaam* (enamel work), building construction, gun and tank production, and glass blowing flourished. Lakhpatji went on to establish a *hunnar kala shala*, or folk arts school, and over the coming centuries this came to dictate stylistic trends in artistic and architectural production in the city.[20] Even today, the descendents of artists from this period continue to practise in places as far-flung as Baroda, Mumbai, and Kolkata.

Left: The Venetian chandelier in the Aina Mahal's Phuvara Mahal, reputed to have been brought to Kutch by Ramsingh Malam in the mid-18th century. The photograph records the occasion in 1957 of the Norwegian Ambassador's visit with his wife to Kutch. Seen with them are Maharao Madansinhji at far left, Maharani Rajendra Kunvarba at far right; and Kanvranisahib Jorawarsinhji.

Right: The Phuvara (fountain) Mahal on the ground floor of the Aina Mahal, photographed in the late 19th century, with a couch in place of a silver throne. The photograph shows 19th-century mosque lamps which lit the periphery of the room; painted portraits of the Raos of Kutch; Venetian chandeliers probably acquired from Europe in the 1700s; and rich brocade and woven carpets. The Phuvara Mahal was famed for hosting soirèes with poets trained at Lakhpatji's Brijbhasha Pathshala. The room suffered considerable structural damage in the earthquake of 2001, although many of its artefacts were salvaged.

Maharao Lakhpatji died in the year 1760, leaving behind him sixteen queens and concubines who, in the tradition of ritual *sati*, flung themselves onto his funeral pyre. Special stone inscriptions were prepared to commemorate this occasion, along with the famed *chhatri* (pavilion) which was constructed in his memory, and which was completely destroyed in the 2001 earthquake. Its imprint is still visible, southwest of the old city on flat ground adjacent to Hamirsar Lake, within a complex of royal cenotaphs (see pages 199–203 and 224–225).

Rao Godji II succeeded Lakhpatji to the throne. During his reign, from 1760 to 1779, thirty more ministers and diwans were transferred, making the government unstable and instigating a war with Sindh that would put considerable pressure on Kutch.[21] Although Godji's reign does not mark any significant contribution to the history of Bhuj's development, it supports an entirely different analysis, lending credence to the idea that the Dutch colonial influence in Kutch was subtle, diffused, and not simply limited to Bhuj. Godji commissioned

Above: View of the apartments housing the Aina Mahal on the first floor, with the *bakshi*'s office on the ground floor, possibly early 1930s. The historic Bhamariya well is to the right. Maharao Khengarji III would retire at night to his apartments at top right.

Below: View of the apartments housing the Aina Mahal, photographed after the earthquake, in 2003.

Ramsingh Malam to build the royal palace in Mandvi, the *maholaat*, with its sculptural reliefs of soldiers and musicians dressed in 18th-century European manner. These bear a striking resemblance to the figures which grace both the *nagaara khana* of the Darbargarh in Bhuj and the Dwarkadhish Temple on Bhuj's Uplipal Road. If these similarities mark a healthy cultural transmission, is it possible that Ramsingh had a hand in sculpting several more buildings in the city than simply the Aina Mahal – and, more likely – in teaching a generation of builders and craftsmen to think like him?[22]

What seem to be insignificant remnants cropping out from rubble after the earthquake of 2001 often point to events which dramatically shaped Bhuj in the 18th century. One lesser-known, intriguing artefact from Godji II's reign, for example, is the little *deri* to commemorate Diwan Puja Seth, which miraculously survived the earthquake. Godji II's diwan, Puja Seth, was a vindictive politician who defected to Sindh in retaliation for his lukewarm treatment by the Rao. Supporting Sindh's Ghulam Shah Kalora, Seth guided the Sindh army to Bhuj, where Kutch suffered an embarrassing defeat in the battle of Jhara, forcing Godji II to acknowledge Puja Seth and entreat him to side once again with Kutch. Seth convinced Kalora to retreat from the city's gates,[23] but his own end was equally unglamorous: the Rao, unable to reconcile himself to Seth's earlier defection to Sindh, promptly poisoned him to death.

Rao Raidhanji II's accession to the throne (1778–1786, and 1801–1813) opens an entirely new chapter in the history of the city's development. Raidhan's rule appears to have been a difficult one, marked by political power-play at court and his own influence by the mystic scholar Mohammed Pannah, in whose memory a mosque close to Mahadev Gate was constructed.[24] Popular interpretation has it that Raidhanji's born-again religiosity went to his head, creating ripples of unrest in Bhuj, and the story goes that it only exacerbated his fervour.[25] It was important that his destructive tendencies be curbed, and it is said that many *bhayad*s, followers, and leaders, supported by Anjar's Meghji Seth, staged a bloodless coup together, confining him to prison in the year 1786. Meghji Seth's *deri*, much like Puja Seth's, still crops up unassumingly in the incongruous jungle of development that has overtaken the immediate extremity of Vaniawad Gate – a reminder, certainly, that such seemingly inconsequential buildings represent important moments in the city's cultural and political history.

Raidhanji II's imprisonment by Meghji Seth brought the young Prince Regent Bharmalji II to the throne. Still a child, he was appointed a guardian, and affairs of the state were turned over to the Regency Council, who decided that a charismatic, upcoming foot soldier – Jamadar Fateh Mohammed – should oversee the affairs of state. He is said to have assumed almost complete control over the kingdom, making alliances with Mysore's Tipu Sultan and vassals from Jamnagar and Morbi, in addition to the famed horseman Sundarji Saudagar and a local mendicant, Mekan Dada.[26]

Above: Meghji Seth's historic *deri*, photographed from a perch on top of Vaniawad Gate sometime at the turn of the 19th century (the gate was partly demolished first in the 1930s and later, completely in the 1960s), looking towards the Bhujiyo Hill and settlement in front of it. The *deri* is a small shrine located lower right of centre in this photograph, and still exists on this spot. To the left is the Seth Kamu Suleiman *musafirkhana*, a 19th-century complex administered by the Muslim Educational Welfare Society. A road bisects the photograph vertically, connecting what is today Station Road with what was then the British Army Camp.

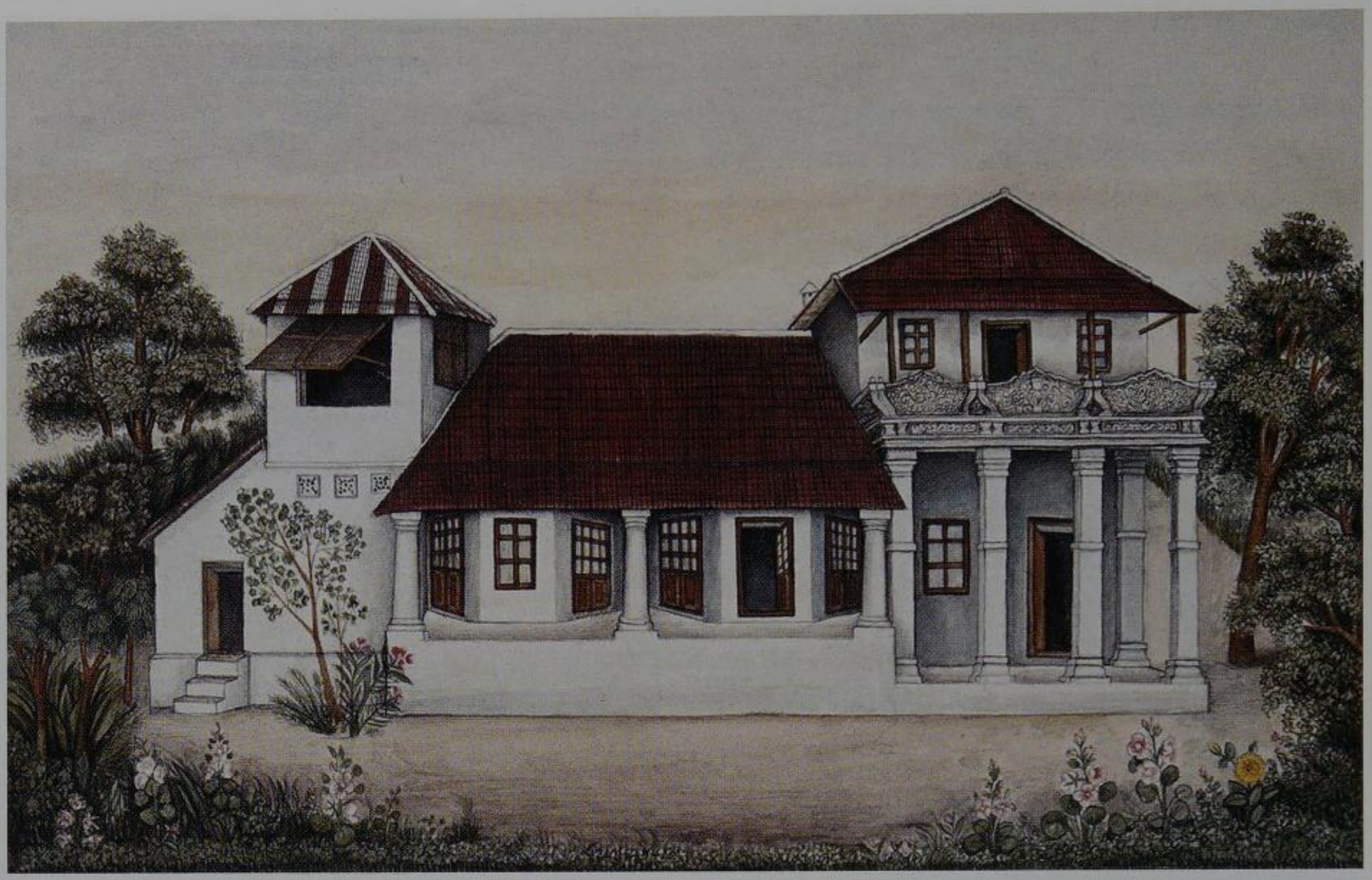
Below: Meghji Seth's *deri* in 2003, although it is now overpowered by the Budharmal Takhatrai petrol pump which was developed behind it in the 1980s. Modern-day development has completely transformed the *deri*'s tranquil locale.

Portrait of Jamadar Fateh Mohammed (1531–1603 CE), Kutch, with *tazbi* beads and rose in hand. Pen-and-ink drawing on paper, mounted. Mid-19th century, probably from an earlier painting. The jamadar was one of Kutch's most charismatic and level-headed politicians, whose resume suggests that he began humbly as an illiterate shepherd, then became a foot soldier (jamadar), and finally rose through the ranks to become an influential member of Kutch's governing oligarchy, in place of Rao Raidhanji.

Soon after the Jamadar ascended to power, a plague claimed thousands of lives in 1813 and 1814. Large numbers of people in Bhuj died from the "scourge", and it is rumoured that people had to resort to selling off their children in order to survive.[27] The plague plunged Kutch into political anarchy, and highlighted Bhuj's poor sanitary conditions. It also robbed Bhuj of its more noteworthy citizens, among them Jamadar Fateh Muhammad, who died in October, 1813; and Rao Raidhanji, who fell victim to the plague just twenty-four days later, at the age of 49.

Rao Bharmalji II's five-year reign (1814–1819) witnessed a growing British colonial presence in Kutch, which would have its own ramifications on Bhuj's development. The British had already established their army in the region, and their presence had slowly begun changing the face of Bhuj. They struck camp under the Bhujiyo's shadow, constructing buildings and streets orthogonally in the *grand manière*. But theirs was, to begin with, a relatively quiet presence in Kutch, with the King and the East India Company indulging in much friendly talk and negotiating terms of trade.[28]

But the solidity of a British presence in Kutch was soon to be shaken irrevocably by disaster. In June 1819, an earthquake struck the city of Bhuj, due to which the route of the Sindhu River may have changed, cutting off Bhuj's water supply. British military officers, particularly Captain James MacMurdo, wrote accounts of considerable destruction to the city, with upwards of seven to eight thousand buildings in Bhuj collapsing, in addition to breaches in the city's 18th-century fortifications.[29] The earthquakes of 1819 and 1844 did much to alter the geographical terrain of Bhuj, leaving a trail of destruction which profoundly arrested the continuity of an architectural tradition that had been honed over three hundred years of the



"Watercolour of the bungalow of the Bombay Army officer, Thomas Chase Parr and his wife Harriet at Bhuj, in Kutch, Gujarat, by an anonymous artist working in the Western India/Cutch style, c. 1851. Inscribed on front in ink by Harriet Parr: 'Our House Bhooj, 1851'. The bungalow seen in this drawing has a two-storeyed addition with an elaborately decorated balcony on one side. Hollyhocks and sunflowers thrive in the garden." By permission of The British Library, London.

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city's evolution (very few buildings previous to the earthquake of 1819 have survived), and necessitated newer technologies of construction which would draw directly from foreign, mostly British colonial, influence.

Although the king and his *bhayads* and landowners had slowly come to accept British political superiority, the East India Company suddenly curbed the king's rights and freedom, and this again appears to have excited tensions in Bhuj. There were reports of murder and arson, and Maharao Bharmalji took the drastic step of opposing British policies outrightly, against wiser council. In retaliation, the British attacked Bhujiyo fort in 1819, captured it, and equipped it with cannon. Maharao Bharmalji was forced to surrender, and was retained as a royal prisoner.

The East India Company and the State of Kutch drew up a new contract, which stipulated that a regency council be organized and a puppet monarch, the young Deshalji II (1819–1860), be elevated to the throne.

Maharao Deshalji II had taken to the throne at the young age of eighteen in 1819, but showed an early competence in enforcing the law. But he was to remain, at best, a puppet

Desalji II, seated in his *kacheri* and surrounded by courtiers. A nautch girl dances the *mujra* at centre. The courtiers represent several communities, including the Jethi (at far left), Vala Khawaas, Faraash, Mallek and Chandadi. The scene includes several *bhayads*, and dignitaries from the princely state of Dhrangadhra.

Above: British Residency bungalows, Bhuj, photographed possibly in the 1890s.

Right: Kamaagar rendition of a British infantryman with his hound, possibly mid-19th-century, on the wall of a house in Mundra *taluka.*

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prince; the British government had begun to spread its commercial and military tentacles throughout Kutch, and the region slowly began to respond to industrialization and policies tailored increasingly to British interests.[30]

The British government decided that its army would stay in Bhuj, and the port of Mandvi would remain open to British use. The English may have seen the State of Kutch's internal fragmentation, with constant skirmishes between Bhayad and Jadeja *jagirdar*s, as an opportunity to divide and rule. It was at this time that the President of the Regency Council built a house for the British Resident; this is now what we know to be the historic Ummed Bhavan Circuit House, in the Office of the District Collector and Magistrate.

Above: Cricket at Kharsra in the late 1920s. John Smith, Bhuj's English teacher (second row, second from right), is seated next to the young prince Madansinhji (second row, centre). Other household staff, whom members of the Royal Family can still recognize, include Gagooba, who played cricket with Prince Vijayarajji (turbaned, centre, top row) and Siroo, a *siddi* of East African descent (bottom row, sitting second from right), who was a keen footballer.

Below: Maharao Pragmalji II photographed with British cantonment officers probably in the early 1870s on the Aina Mahal's terrace, now closed from outside view. Custom demanded that a *chopdar*, posted at a door at the picture's far right, publicly announce, with three calls, the arrival of royalty onto the terrace.

Modernization and the new city image

Industrialization brought with it tremendous reformation, which explains the spate of architectural activity in the city in the 19th century. Schools and hospitals mushroomed in Bhuj. Rao Deshalji's health, however, began to deteriorate, and his successor – later to become Pragmalji II – was married off while his father was still alive. When the prince finally took to the throne, the vast, hitherto undeveloped expanses of land outside the old city must have appeared inviting in contrast to the congested Old City within the fort's walls.

Much like Maharao Lakhpatji who, in the mid-18th century, had encouraged the transmission of ideas between Kutch and the wider world, Pragmalji II (1860–1875) illustrates the intriguing possibility of a ruler's patronage for photography influencing the way a city would literally come to be viewed. Judging from the profusion of photographs emerging from studios patronised by the Kutch Court, it is clear that state photographers were being charged with the new responsibility of documenting the city from all angles, and taking all manner of events in stock. And so emerges a litany of panoramic views of the city from vantage points along the lake, and in the wake of royal processions as they wind their way through the streets of Bhuj. It is difficult to ascribe a reason to such photographic fervour, but the Maharao may have been keen to document views of the city as a record of his achievements, and to indulge the painterly curiosity that was the photographic medium.

Pragmalji II proved to be a patron of architecture, combining a surprisingly modern political outlook with a fierce sense of Kutchi state-

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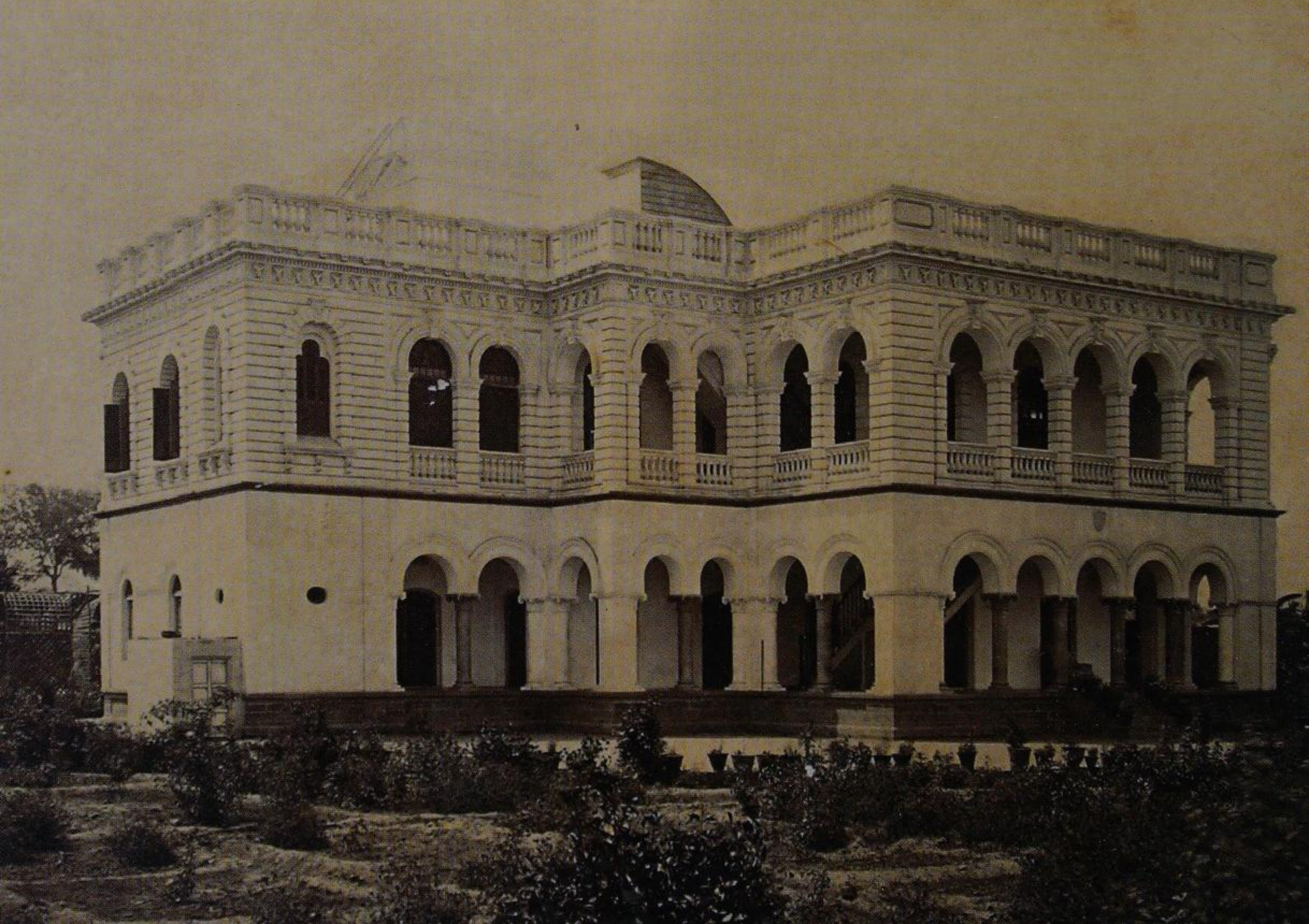
Portrait of Maharao Pragmalji II, c. 1870s, Bhuj. Pragmalji commissioned the construction of several important landmarks, including the Jail, the Hathisthan (elephant stables), the Alfred High School, Pragsar Tank, and the Sharad Bagh Palace.

hood and tradition. At one stage he is said to have gone all the way to the British Cabinet to fight for his *bhayads*' special rights to property in areas surrounding the city. He seems unembarrassed, however, to have acknowledged patently British colonial trends in construction, ornament, and urban planning. The Sharad Bagh Palace, for example, a study in late–19th century neo-classical architecture, was built during his reign, as were Zhalam Sinh's Haveli (now, the Bhuj Commercial Cooperative Bank in the centre of the town); Bhuj's Jail near Sarpat Gate (see page 222); the Hathisthan, or "elephant stable" (see below), of which only its ornamented gate survives today; the Alfred High School, newly restored in 2004 (see pages 197–198); and Pragsar Tank, an innovation to conserve city water. Pragmalji's most important architectural commissions remained the Prag Mahal; begun in 1862, and completed in 1865, its incongruously Italianate Gothic outline sharply contrasted with the rooftops of neighbouring Kachchhi houses.[31] (see pages 47, 147–149.)

Pragmalji II's project of development was not limited to constructing new buildings but extended to infrastructure commissions as well; the *diwan* Krishnaji Tulkar, a Maratha engineer, was appointed to design and build a bridge across Hamirsar Lake, which would eventually come to be known as the Krishnaji Bridge, as it is still used today. Throughout the 1870s and 1880s, the Hamirsar's waterfront continued to transform, with the addition of the Bhuj Municipality building, which went into operation sometime around 1884. And, while modernizing Kutch's currency system, the Maharao undertook to build a new mint not far from Mahadev Gate, which now serves as the Mamlatdar's Office. Maharao Pragmalji II went to Mumbai in 1875 to welcome the Prince of Wales, but on his return to Bhuj fell ill and died at the age of 37, on January 1, 1876.

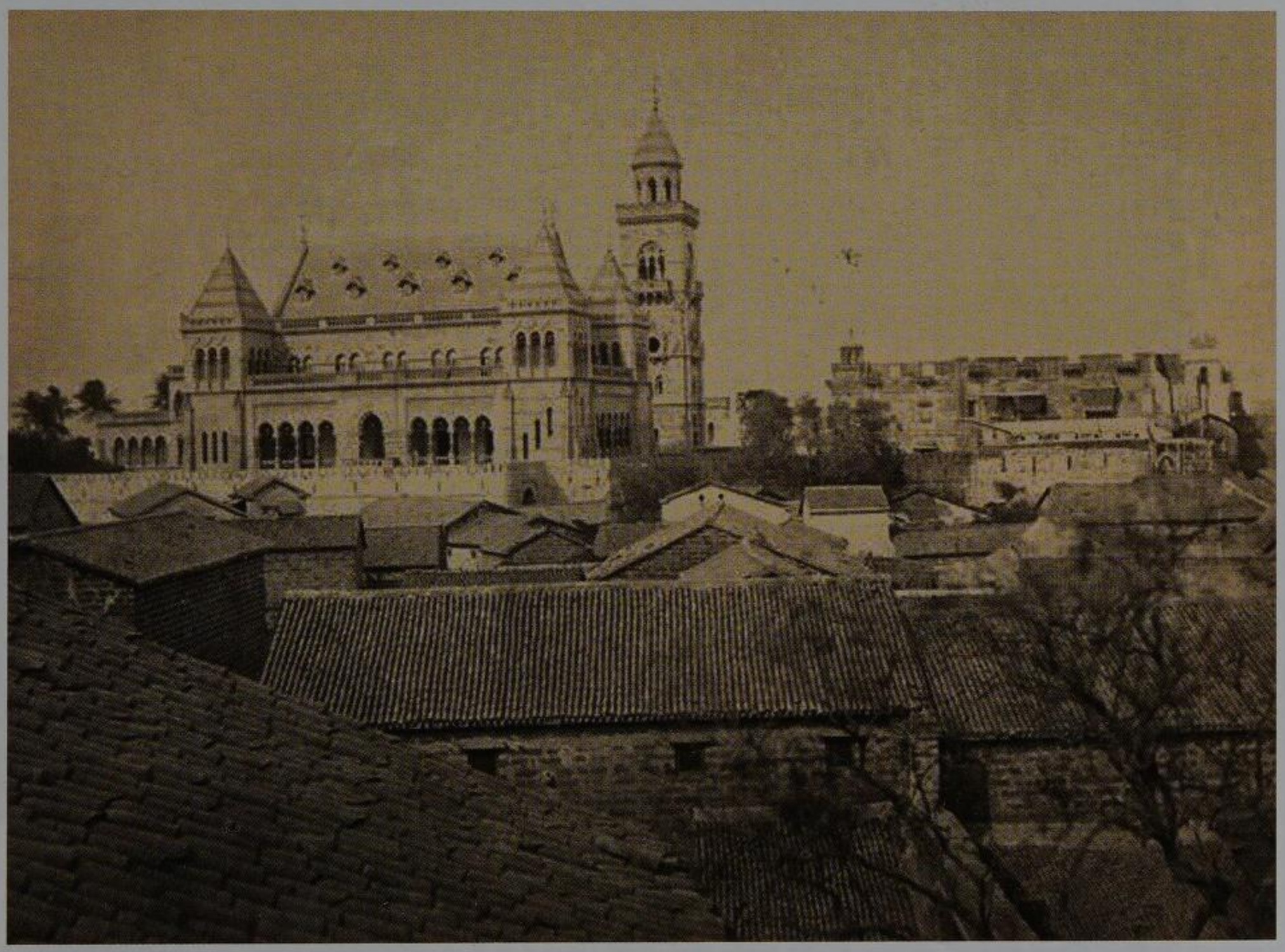
Pragmalji II was succeeded by the ten-year-old Khengarji III (1876–1942). Although his reign would inspire a measure of praise for his development efforts, it would also invite considerable criticism for his tight-fisted methods of governance. The Maharao continued his father's commitment to building state infrastructure: Kandla Port was constructed in 1931 by engineer Keshavji Shyamji, and a small guage railway built to connect Kandla and Tuna. The Maharao granted permission to commence the first bus service from Bhuj to Mandvi in 1935, and the telephone

Gate to the Hathisthan, the royal elephant stables, c. 1875.



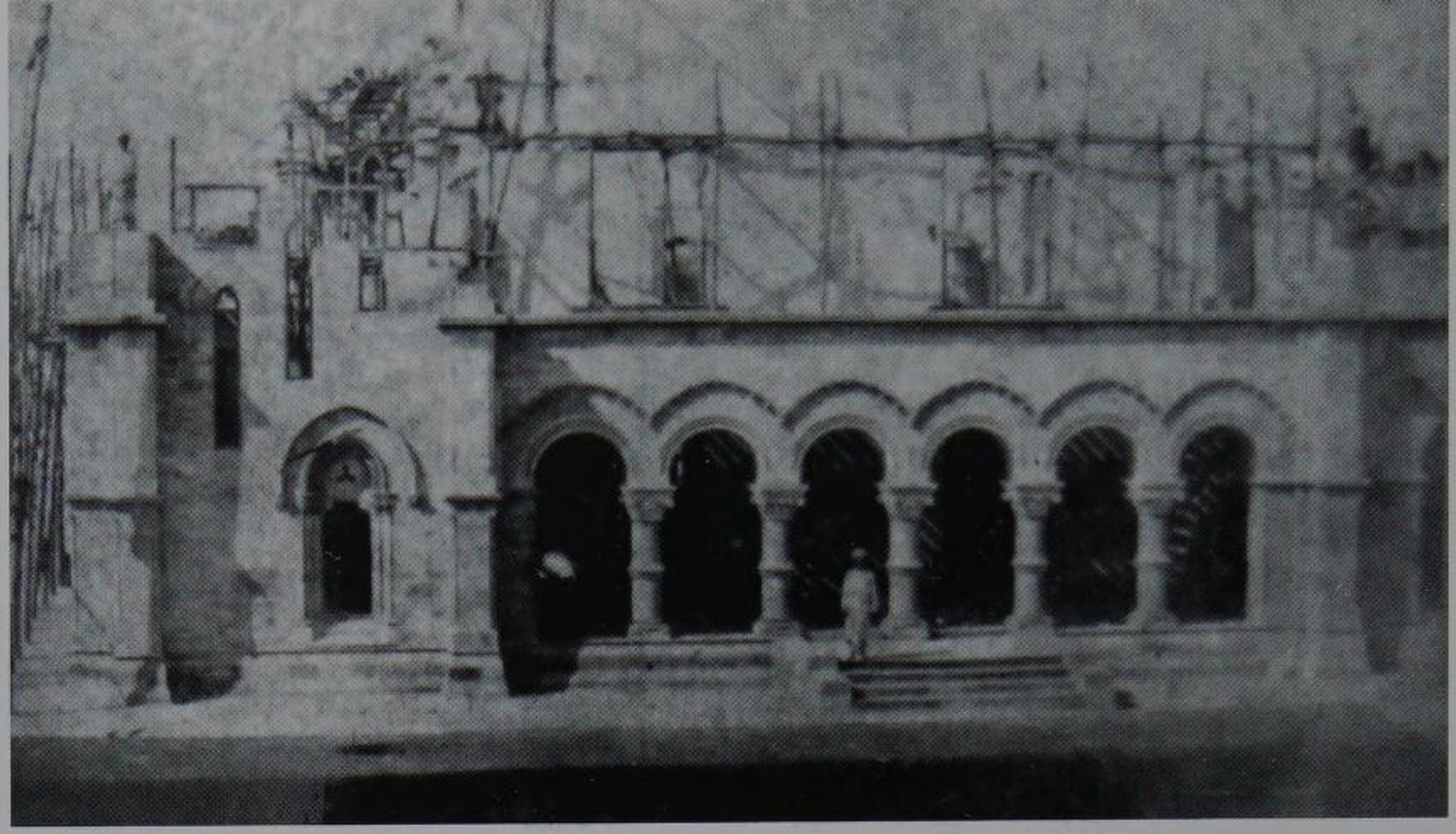
arrived in Kutch in 1936. Bhuj's air services began in 1945 from its newly constructed aerodrome, bringing an end to the region's isolation from the rest of the country. Moreover, the Maharao's reforms extended to institutional development in Bhuj.[32] A city museum and a library outside it were established on January 1, 1877, and inaugurated by the British Resident's wife. It is of noteworthy contrast to such development, however – besides a comment on the technology of early 20th-century railway and steamboat travel and the compulsions of turn-of-the-century industrial migration – that the region's major sources of income had largely taken the form of "money order" remittances from expatriate Kutchis who had chosen to move to greener pastures in search of more liberal economies, where they could exercise their entrepreneurial freedom. *Salaat* builders were in demand elsewhere in bustling cities such as Bombay, and trade was beginning to expand outwards from Mandvi and smaller seaports to points westward. To the sociologist of migration today, such a dramatic and direct effect of industrialization on an entire identity-politic of a people would be of considerable curiosity, when thousands of Kachchhis today live elsewhere – in East Africa, the UK and the United States – but continue to transact with a place in Kutch called "home".[33]

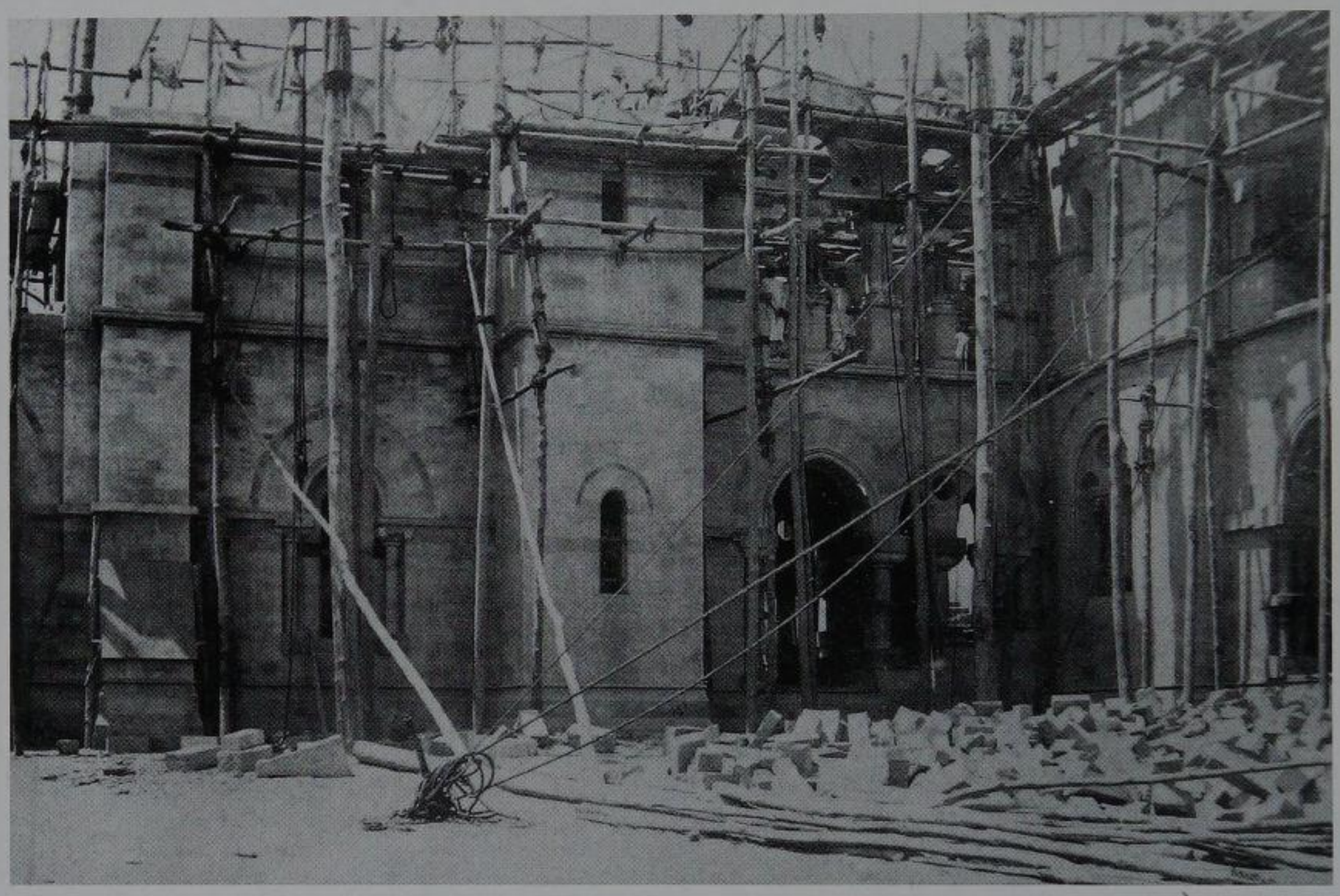
A view of the Darbargarh, facing east, photographed in the late 1870s from Vala Khawaas-*ni-Sheri*.

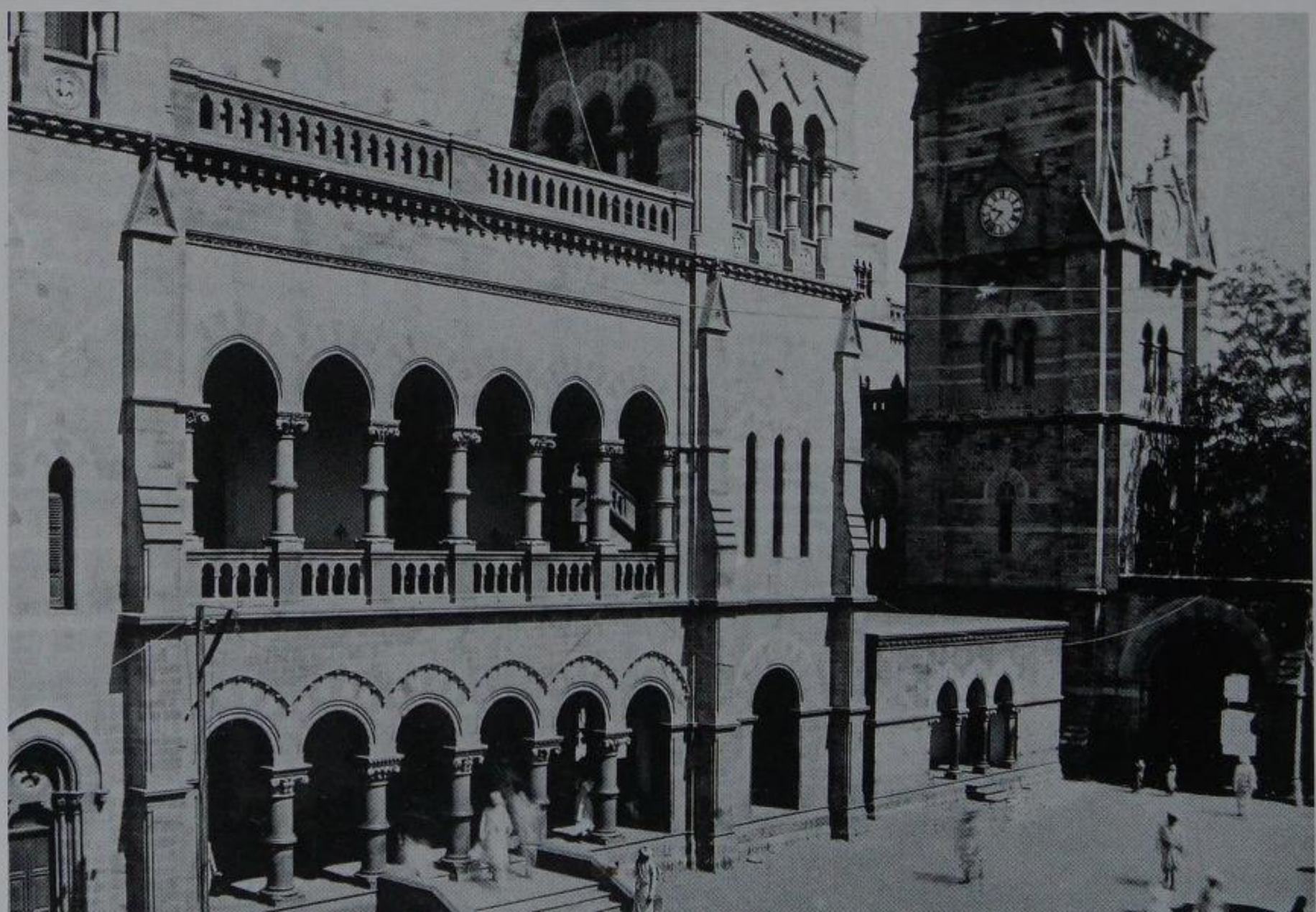


Facing page:
Above: MKS Godji of Kutch with the young princes KS Narpatsinhji and KS Jorawarsinhji, seated against an outdoor pavilion at Sharad Bagh in 1922. The pool with lilies has now been planted over.

Below: The rear facade of Sharad Bagh, facing southwest, photographed c. 1870s.







Above left: Krishnaji Tulkar, diwan at Pragmalji II's court, a Maratha engineer appointed by the Maharao, to design and build a bridge across the Hamirsar. Photographed in the 1870s.

Above right: Maharao Khengarji III, photographed in his early sixties.

Left: Hand-coloured photograph of the Krishnaji bridge across Hamirsar Lake, with Prag Mahal's clock tower in the background and a portrait of MKS Vijayarajji, photographed probably in the late 1920s. The present-day Hotel Lakeview would be to the bridge's left, and Sanskarnagar behind the outcrop of trees. Artist unknown.

Facing page:

Above: From a stereoscopic photograph of the Prag Mahal under construction, c. 1865, photographed by the State Photographer Mavsi Ranchhod Gajjar.

Centre: View of the Prag Mahal under construction, photographed probably in the early 1860s.

Below: Front (east) facade of the Prag Mahal, photographed in the early 1940s. The building was constructed using hard red sandstone quarried in Kutch.

Above: View of the Old Railway Station, Bhuj, framed against the Bhujiyo fortress sometime in the late 1930s. No traces of this building remain after it was demolished and a newer building constructed in the 1980s. The old Railway Engineer's Quarters (once the lodgings of the well-known engineer Mr. Kothari from Limbdi), was built at the turn of the century and is located adjacent to this site. It remains a landmark in Kachchh's transportation history, and merits historical attention.

Below: View of what remains of the Old Railway Station, Bhuj. Even though it had been renovated several years after an old structure was demolished, it is now derelict. The building still complements the old station-master's bungalow in the same compound. An entirely new railway station now serves the city, and is situated at a distance from the old compound.

Above: The Old Railway Station, Bhuj, view from the tracks, photographed probably in the late 1930s.

Below: The Old Railway Station, Bhuj. The same spot, photographed in 2003.

Maharao Madansinhji with Rushbrook Williams and his wife outside the Sharad Bagh Palace, possibly 1955.

As technological advances began to shape commerce and industry, weekday life in the city continued to follow a quaintly standard schedule under the late–19th-century shadow of the Darbargarh's clock tower. Bhuj's official working hours at the time were from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., with a long recess for lunch. Residents recall how office-goers sat on mattresses and cushions to do their work. Particularly difficult union problems were put to the Maharao at the daily durbar to be resolved, and his verdict was considered final.[34]

Daily life, politics, and the first sparks of Independence

But while the life of the office-going citizen seemed largely peaceful, the Maharao found himself caught up in the larger, abstract politics of dissent and unrest fuelled by the Indian Independence movement outside Kutch, events that would distract him from his work of building the state's maritime and urban infrastructure as well as test his political acumen. Some historians consider the monarch to have been too repressive, too conservative, and uninterested in opening the Old City up to development and change.[35] It is said that one reason why Kachchhis had begun migrating to points as far west as Africa was because they were unable to receive permission to buy land outside the Old City, and to expand and develop their businesses without succumbing to the state's bureaucracy. Others assert that Khengarji believed in compromise and passivity as a means to testing the true will of his people; he expected that they would "break under

Priests of the Swaminarayan sect in Bhuj, Kutch, late 19th century.

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their own [political] weight" and so rarely interfered in the daily affairs of state, leaving these monumental tasks to his trusted diwan.

As the Independence struggle grew, its reach extended from Bombay to the cities of Kutch. Beginning in 1905, voices of dissent and revolt turned to openly criticising the Maharao and his administration. In Kutch, public sentiment seemed more towards doing away with the monarchy than with the possibility of freeing the state from British rule. One instrument to systematize and control this momentum became the Kachchh Praja Sangh (Kachchh People's Collective), which was established in 1923.[36]

Important political figures began to appear in Bhuj. Mahatma Gandhi visited the city on October 22, 1925, in the company of Sardar Vallabbhai Patel and Mahadev Desai in addition to leaders from the Indian National Congress. He was grandly welcomed at Mahadev Gate and the party was given accommodation in the Naniba Sanskrut Pathshala at Patwadi Gate. A large meeting was organised on that day in Bhuj at Nagar-*wandi*, and after their three-day tour they returned to Ahmedabad via Tuna port and Navlakhi. Inspired by Gandhi's speeches, activists formed the Kachchhi Prajakiya Parishad (Kachchhi People's Committee) in 1926, which went on to support larger arguments for a national republic and a democratic Kachchh State.[37]

The clouds of World War II were already hovering around on 22nd March 1939, when, in the heat of the moment, Gandhi declared a temporary suspension of the freedom struggle, and this threw Kutch's activism into momentary disarray.

In the midst of all this – from all accounts by people who were living at the time in the old city – it might have appeared to anybody walking through its narrow, quiet streets that Bhuj continued to exist as though nothing about it had changed. Daily life seemed a humdrum existence in which people shuttled from home to the office in the Kutch State's service. Modernization and cosmopolitanism had had little effect on society; youth who had lived with the Mahatma in the Panvaas were forced to face excommunication from their communities in the old city. Radio was still a luxury to most, and so Mahatma Gandhi's words were rarely heard. Even then, newspaper reports of the "Quit India" Movement and World War II appeared to have captured Bhuj's public imagination. There was always impending fear of an attack on Bhuj during World War II, and the air-raid sirens finally wailed on the 23rd of February, 1942. Residents still remember how the Home Guards and Civil Defence Action Squad put out bags of sand on the roads to repel a Japanese advance.[38]

But there were happier moments during the War. John Hubert Smith, an Englishman, had arrived in Bhuj as a teacher to the royal family, and he did much to help the city's poor, establishing the Poor People's Relief Fund and the Smith Seva Sangh to help orphans and the crippled. He soon came to be popularly known as "Smith Sahib", commanding respect for his several talents as teacher, sportsman, and shikar enthusiast. Smith is reputed to have begun his philanthropic activity in Khattri Chakla, promoting women's home-based industries of making *papads*, *vadi*, and embroidery, and is remembered for his exuberant Christmas romps through the streets of Bhuj dressed as Santa Claus.[39] The last remaining monument to his memory, an early 19th-century British colonial bungalow located behind the District Collector's Office, was torn down by rubble contractors after the earthquake of 2001. He lies buried in the grounds of the Old Protestant Church, not far from Bhujiyo Hill.

Facing page:
Above: Khengarji III presides over a meeting of Kachchhi Bhatias, probably in Bombay in the late 1930s. To his left sits Dr. Jadavji Hansraj Vaidya, a civil surgeon and ophthalmologist who was Chief Medical Officer of Kutch State and one of the founders of the Bhatia Hospital in Bombay.

Below: The Darbar Hall in Prag Mahal. On this occasion, Vijayarajji welcomes a special American envoy during his visit to Bhuj in 1943, dispatched by the President of the United States to thank the people of Kutch for having rescued and accommodated the crew of an American warship stranded in the Gulf of Kutch. The crew would later depart by a specially chartered aeroplane. Vijayarajji would later narrate this incident in the form of a note that was recently discovered in the photographic archives of the MKS Godji Collection.

The Old Protestant Church, constructed in 1866, where John Smith lies buried.

The monarchy versus the people

Even before the Second World War had come to an end, Bhuj was beginning to witness an influx of people from around the district, as frequent famines and few opportunities for employment took their toll on the social psyche. During the war years, Bhuj's commerce had begun to improve as rationing led ironically to a thriving black market for goods, which in turn had begun to further encourage commercial activity in the city. Businessmen from other regional centres such as Rapar, Bhachau, and Anjar had begun to converge on Bhuj, where it seemed that there would be considerably greater opportunities for employment in the informal sector. Administrative offices were at the time concentrated in Bhuj, and included the High Court, high schools, and trade offices, all magnets of employment for rural migrants. The Old City began to feel increasingly congested as a result of this great influx of people.

However, while space was indeed scarce, the idea to build Bhuj anew appears to have grown more as a result of disagreements at the Court than for any other reason. Khengarji III is said to have endured a frosty relationship with his eldest son Vijayarajji; one of the reasons for this is perhaps that he was too generous with the Privy Purse, something the Prince Regent did not appreciate. Given that the Royal Purse was being severely depleted, father and son decided that they would sell a portion of their royal land to private investors, and that monies from these transactions would be deposited into the Royal Exchequer. This brilliant idea was the brainchild of Manu Subedar, founder of the nationally renowned *Bap-nu-Ghar* institution for disadvantaged women in Mumbai, a leading Indian economist, a financial advisor to Khengarji, and a trustee of the Lotus Trust, an organisation doing social work in the city. Residents still remember that there used to be a *Bap-nu-Ghar* where the old Lotus Cinema once stood.

One of Khengarji III's two queens, photographed probably in the 1870s. She holds a fan and wears gold jewellery produced locally by Soni silversmiths.

Maps showing 60-by-90 foot plots of land were drawn up for the new colony. Each plot was to be offered for 500 *koris*, which when converted into rupees amounted to approximately Rs. 150 per plot. The new colony was to be named Vijaynagar after Vijayarajji, even though it would be developed during Khengarji III's lifetime.[40]

It quickly became clear, however, that residents of the Old City were unwilling to move out in the 1930s, and so the plots went unclaimed for ten to twelve years, with very few people coming forward to buy them. Stone markers on-site gradually melted into oblivion, since no drainage, sewerage, tree plantation or leveling had occurred in the interim years. And a basic question remained: if a housing colony could very well have been developed outside Sarpat Gate or in Kharsra, both to the north of the walled city, and since all land belonged de facto to the Maharao, why was a new housing development being envisioned *south* of the Old City, so close to Vaniawad Gate? The answer lies in the fact that Vijaynagar had been planned in its current location outside Vaniawad Gate to please wealthy potential Vania clients, many of whom had settled in Mumbai, Hyderabad, Kerala, and East Africa. Many in the Kachchhi global diaspora had continued to retain properties in Vokla Falia, Vaniawad, and areas around Meherali Chowk, places which had large Jain Vania concentrations. These people could afford to buy plots of land and to construct on them: as early as 1941, the first Bank of India in Darbargarh opened mostly Vania accounts.[41]

Manu Subedar went on to acquire a large plot of land from Khengarji and Vijayarajji as a gift for a token fee, in the name of Lotus Trust. This would eventually become Lotus Colony, located close to the old Dosabhai Lalchand Jain *dharmashala*.

Lotus Colony's development, in a sense, could only heighten the cultural incongruity of building a spanking new city outside the confines of a traditional walled settlement

characterized by ancient *sheri*s, *falia*s, and *delo*s. This pattern of drastically new development must have changed age-old ways of living, a compromise in urban culture which would come to reflect people's conscious shift away from certain traditions – and trades – in their effort to forge new lives for themselves. There is possibly a lesson in this for Bhuj's residents after the earthquake of 2001, as the city goes about reconstructing itself and reshaping its economy in the long term. We are left with the intriguing sociological question: what have new developments done to break Bhuj's cultures of interdependence – a sense of craftedness, beauty, and neighbourhood – so completely from the past? Would the city's residents consider these changes to be good or bad?

In 1942, when Vijayarajji assumed the throne, it was clear that trouble was brewing in the state and that the Maharao would have to think of drastically reforming its administration, relaxing Khengarji III's iron-fisted economic and real estate restrictions.[42] One of his first initiatives had been to strengthen the Municipality's powers. The Maharao assembled a large court to announce certain reforms, but found it difficult to implement them because his administration lacked the cohesiveness and efficiency necessary to effect daring changes; this, coupled with the fact that the Kachchhi Prajakiya Parishad, under Yusuf Meherali's leadership, had been demanding transparency in government ever since 1938. Pranlal Shah, a noted local politician, even went so far as to publish a pamphlet called *Kutch's Hollow Reforms*, for which he was arrested under the Sedition Act 57(a).[43]

In the mean time, Vijayarajji appointed another diwan, Mr. Mukherjee, who came from Baroda, to counter public resistence and improve the internal workings of the government, but he is said to have proven a poor choice. Incident after incident exacerbated the public's anger. Local laws, for instance, had been enacted to ban citizens from shooting wild animals. Farmers were now beginning to find that they had no power to curb wildlife from destroying their harvests. Helplessly, they had petitioned Khengarji and Vijayarajji several times, but to no success.[44] This led to two public movements, the *cheetah satyagraha* and the *rakhal satyagraha*, which fomented public sentiment against the monarchy, fuelled by the arguments of those who had supported the "Quit India" Movement in 1942, and distracted Vijayarajji from concentrating on matters of state.

As the years went by and Indian independence from British rule became more of a conceptual possibility, there were rumours that Kutch would join Pakistan. The Maharao's heir, Madansinhji, met with Lord Mountbatten, the Viceroy, in Delhi, to discuss Kutch's future in 1947, and by June of that year, the British Government would cease to govern the region. In the larger scheme of things, 1947 proved equally momentous for the city's dual celebration of India's independence from the British and the Kachchhi people's increasing disengagement from monarchy. In celebration of India's Independence Day (which had technically nothing to do with Kutch State, the region which still had to formally join the Indian Union), elderly

residents remember decorating the city's streets with colourful garlands of flowers and lamps, distributing sweets everywhere, and chanting *"Jai Hind"*, *"Bharat Matani Jai"*, and *"Azadi Amar Rahe"* through the night of August 14th. Although Vijayarajji was being medically treated in the United States and Madansinhji was in Delhi, his youngest son Himmatsinhji – who was at the time a student – hoisted both the flags of Kutch and of India on 15th August 1947, in the grounds of the Gangaba Saheb Middle School.

The monarchy, it appeared, was gradually coming to an end. Maharao Vijayarajji died prematurely in February, 1948, after a short, six-year reign, and was succeeded byMadansinhji, who would serve on the throne for a mere three months before Kutch's merger with the Indian Union. The new Maharao is credited with having taken a starkly practical approach to the looming problem of conceptualising Kutch's future identity and its place in relation to the rest of India, and with attempting to reverse the state's stagnant economy. But he could only presage the futility of a monarchy unresponsive to a changing world order, and on June 1, 1948, he finally acceded Kutch to the Indian Union, bringing four hundred years of Jadeja administration to an end.

The changing face of "neighbourhood"

The city remained relatively quiet, politically, for about fifteen years after the end of the monarchy, during which time national luminaries made brief appearances in Bhuj, including Vice President Dr. Radhakrishnan, in 1951, and President Dr. Rajendraprasad, in 1952. A momentum to move out of the Old City only began again in earnest in the early 1960s, and this marked a crucial turn of events not only in the city's physical development but also in the very fabric of its culture and traditional economy. It is this shift in people's priorities to move away which we must crucially understand in order to evaluate where the city of Bhuj now stands, and to place its old trades and traditions in critical perspective against a backdrop of quickening changes in the 1960s. Doing so will pointedly bring home the link between city-building and craft production that may have been central to the city's construction industry for four centuries.

In the manufactured tumult of Partition, thousands migrated to Kachchh from Pakistan.[45] Over the next few years, settlers made a few attempts to propose new colonies for the city outside its walled confines, but to a large part could not muster consensus on the issue. In 1960, when the map of Bombay Presidency was redrawn and the new states of Gujarat and Maharashtra created, the government of Gujarat set new budgetary allocations for cooperative housing societies. The District Collectorate in Bhuj at the time began encouraging a team of five hundred residents led by Mulji R. Ganatra and Jamiatbhai B. Vora, both migrants from Karachi, to form a cooperative housing society outside the old city with an initial membership of eleven. By all accounts, this took considerable effort, but the new Bhuj Cooperative Housing Society was finally convened, and a plot of land – until

Bhupendrabhai Thakkar (b. 1940)

I became a politician in Bhuj thirty five years ago only because I was interested in improving the lot of the common man. In 1970, I was the president of the Bhuj city Jan Sangh. At the time, the Jan Sangh was focused simply on the socio-economic problems we were facing: the shortage of grain, produce, market commodities, grievances against justice, that sort of things. I had been interested in doing creative work to build community spirit in *falia*s for several years prior to getting into politics. In November 1955, I remember, we began a *falia mitra mandal* in Bhid Falia with help from our community elders. It started a craze in Bhuj to get children involved in some form of creative activity. We wanted our children to help with organizing local libraries, exercise regularly, get free tuition help, and learn folk dance, singing and theatre. We wanted to stop rampant gambling. We even had our children send Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru a birthday greeting on 14th November one year, and he sent us back a signed reply of thanks. So this kind of work set the stage for my later political career, although I've left it now because I think today's politicians are more interested in becoming cold professionals than in dedicating themselves to principles and ideals.

I remember in particular how Raychand Ladhabhai began a committee of four of five people to help organize "*falia* decoration" competitions, meaning that he would have children clean up lanes and streets, pick up street litter, paint pictures on house facades and compound walls, and make *rangoli*s. The whole point was to deter children from wasting their money on dangerous fireworks. He'd organize a *prabhat pheri* morning procession, leading children around town to promote boycotting crackers during Diwali.

I remember how the city's streets and lanes were only made of pressed earth, but the roads along which the Maharao would proceed were constructed with stones on the side and stone slabs at centre. Bullock carts and camel carts were the main mode of transportation at the time. Cars were a rarity even in the 1940s; the Maharao always travelled in a Bentley or Ford, and crowds would gather along his route whenever his car came into view. Eventually, the motorcar became a common sight, mostly due to the establishment of the Kutch State Motor Service, which began its first bus service in Bhuj near Meherali Chowk, at the rear of the old bus station. I remember the fact that the seat next to the driver on these buses was called the Upper (VIP) seat, the charge for which was one-and-a-half times that of a normal seat. Distances then were measured in *gau*, one *gau* today equaling 2 km.

You asked me about neighbourhood life. I remember that in 1948 we still lived in the old city in a locality with a cluster of houses and a gate. Each house followed basically the same pattern. There would be about forty houses in each *falia*. People residing in the *falia* would be from the same community. The gate to a house consisted of a passage with raised platforms

A Kutch State Motor Service bus leaves the lane leading to the present-day offices of the *Kutch Mitra* newspaper. In the background is the old Dosabhai Lalchand Jain *dharmashala* complex, which still exists close to the new premises of the *Kutch Mitra* newspaper. The *dharmashala*'s buildings date to the mid-19th century. Photographed in the early 1950s.

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on either side (the *baithak*). These would be covered with roof tiles. Any guest would be asked to be seated there and could call into the house from where he was sitting. Someone from the house would then come out. After this first passage, you would come upon an *aangan* (courtyard) and thereafter you would come to a wooden semi-open door, with a *jaali*. The elders of the house would sleep in the courtyard at night. The elders would meet and talk with all visitors only during the day, and only from here. On the typically right side there would be a *rasoi* (kitchen); and on the typically left you would have a room with entry from the courtyard as well as from the kitchen. Lastly, there would be two more rooms wherein ladies and children could stay. The elders of the house would sit in the drawing room. Toilets were located outside, in the courtyard. Night soil would be collected in a box and every morning it would be cleaned out.

I think the city started to change soon after the Indo-Pak war of 1965 because people began migrating from the border down to Bhuj where they felt they could find a sense of financial security and peace for their families. We even had Kutchi expatriates coming back from Bombay because they were disillusioned with being made to feel like outsiders there, and so they found that property was cheaper here, the cost of living lower, and they invested here. People invested first in land, and so you had the first apartment buildings. It wasn't just the city's business prospects but investment opportunities and speculating land that did it. Even today, actually, land is being auctioned inside the city's limits at rates comparable to Bangalore!

We Lohana children were always up to mischief, and I can tell you about how children went about erecting a *guriyapir* in their *falia*, three days prior to the festival of Holi. I don't think this was a tradition in all of Bhuj, even though customs on Holi aren't very different from elsewhere in Gujarat. The word *guriyapir* explains someone who is very quiet. The third day after the *guriyapir* had been built would be celebrated as Dhuleti, or Padua, and on this day we would call Brahmins into the house and feed them. The ingredients for a *guriyapir* were available generally north of Sarpat Gate, where you could find bentonite

mitti. In those days, people only used natural pigments made with *geru*, flame of the forest flowers, or *gulai* as colour.

Every year, three days before Holi, the entrance to the *falia* was decorated with a small stone slab painted with *geru*, on which were fixed *kori* shells. *Kori* shells could be used to sculpt eyes, a nose and ears on the slab; this arrangement became the *guriyapir*. Young boys, ten to twelve years old, used to go collecting mustard seed oil for the *guriyapir*, singing loudly, filling their vessels because mustard seed oil was very cheap at the time. People never liked it if mustard oil got mixed up with something else. But today it is only groundnut oil which is used and that too it is adulterated. The custom was to mould bentonite into hollow balls which could then be filled with liquid sugar, all these strung together to make a *haarda* (garland). At evening prayers around the *guriyapir*, women would offer these garlands and coconut, popcorn and dry fruit to the flames, or sometimes garland newly born infants or newly wed couples. Often, children collected bentonite to make *galoli* pellets out of the *mitti*, pelting each other and hapless adults for sport at the *chowk* or *maidan* or *guriyapir*. This of course was three days before Holika's worship, for which bonfires were ignited, and the customs surrounding that are more or less practised everywhere. But I remember that the Darbargarh's Holi would first be ignited, after which the rest of the *gam* would follow.

But our fun wasn't limited to the *guriyapir*. Boys stayed up all night on the eve of Dhuleti, harnessing stray donkeys and riding them up and down streets! And at dead of night, we children mischievously targeted those elders who had scolded us the previous year by staging mock funerals for them. We'd construct mock effigies of them in grass, mount them on mock funeral biers, and then parade these as *nanaami* through the streets, weeping theatrically as we went along. I remember occasions when we'd steal logs to be burnt at Holi from carts coming to Bhid to deliver grain and we'd have stockpiled these throughout the previous year, so it took some planning! We'd even sometimes steal doors and windows from houses to be burnt on Holi!

People really respected each community's festivals, and enthusiastically joined in. Even when Muharram *tabut*s used to pass by, mothers of Hindu children would also make them pass under them, and offer oblations of coconut and jaggery to them. I remember that on Kali Chandash day (a day before Diwali), women would take branches of a particular tree, tie an oil- or kerosene-soaked piece of cloth to one end of a stick, burn it, and take it out of their houses into the street. This was done I think to reduce the mosquito menace during Diwali. Women lit these torches outside the city, near the riverbank, and firecrackers would be burnt there only so that no damage would be caused by fire.

then a playground – allotted to them in 1961. This would be transformed into the present-day Orient Colony. Residents remember that adjacent to this parcel of land was a small pond, surrounded by cremation grounds used by the Lohana and Bania communities, and that many people, particularly women in these communities, began objecting vociferously to the idea of a new colony that might defile the memory of their dead.

Protests aside, an entirely new infrastructure would have had to be built for the new housing colony; and, in so doing, the district administration was keen to dispense with its funds quickly. The District Collector called an emergency meeting with Ganatra and Vora to make sure that their initiative kept within the government's stipulated time limit before its grant elapsed. The new Society, without even a letterhead or a rubber stamp to its name, signed hurriedly on plain paper to receive its first installment of funds, and work on the colony's design and construction soon began.

The hurdles seemed enormous. Each member of the housing society was required to contribute the princely sum of Rs. 500 towards the society's construction, for rudimentary housing that would be located a considerable distance from the old city's walls. To begin with, twenty-eight bungalows were built with active participation from all Society members, few of whom were technically competent to understand their builder's thinking. The colony, however, was built in due course, and was named "Orient Colony", a choice of Vora and Ganatra's, who, as pioneers who had moved east from Pakistan, had both been running businesses named Orient Agencies and the Orient Printing Press and to whom the name seemed an obvious choice.

Viewed as a milestone in the city's history of growth, Orient Colony becomes a particularly important study in transformation by design, literally and figuratively speaking. Four hundred square-yard plots had been assigned in principle to each family, but only after all twenty-eight bungalows had been constructed were final allotments made, in a public drawing, and in the Collector's presence. But even then, residents seemed reluctant to move away from the Old City. Drinking water had to be ferried to the Orient Colony, while Vijaynagar boasted five or six wells. The new Orient Colony could afford no such luxuries, and future residents felt more secure within the Old City's walls. It would take several years more for the new colony to be completely occupied.

In the interim, several new housing societies and new development projects began springing up around the old city's walls, changing the complexion of the surrounding landscape. Santosh, ST, Adarsh, Jubilee and Anand colonies began developing in quick succession, but it seemed as though none could match Orient Colony's unique planning, siting, and savings on the cost of construction. The new initiatives attracted investments and social amenities such as GK General Hospital, built in 1956 after an earthquake which

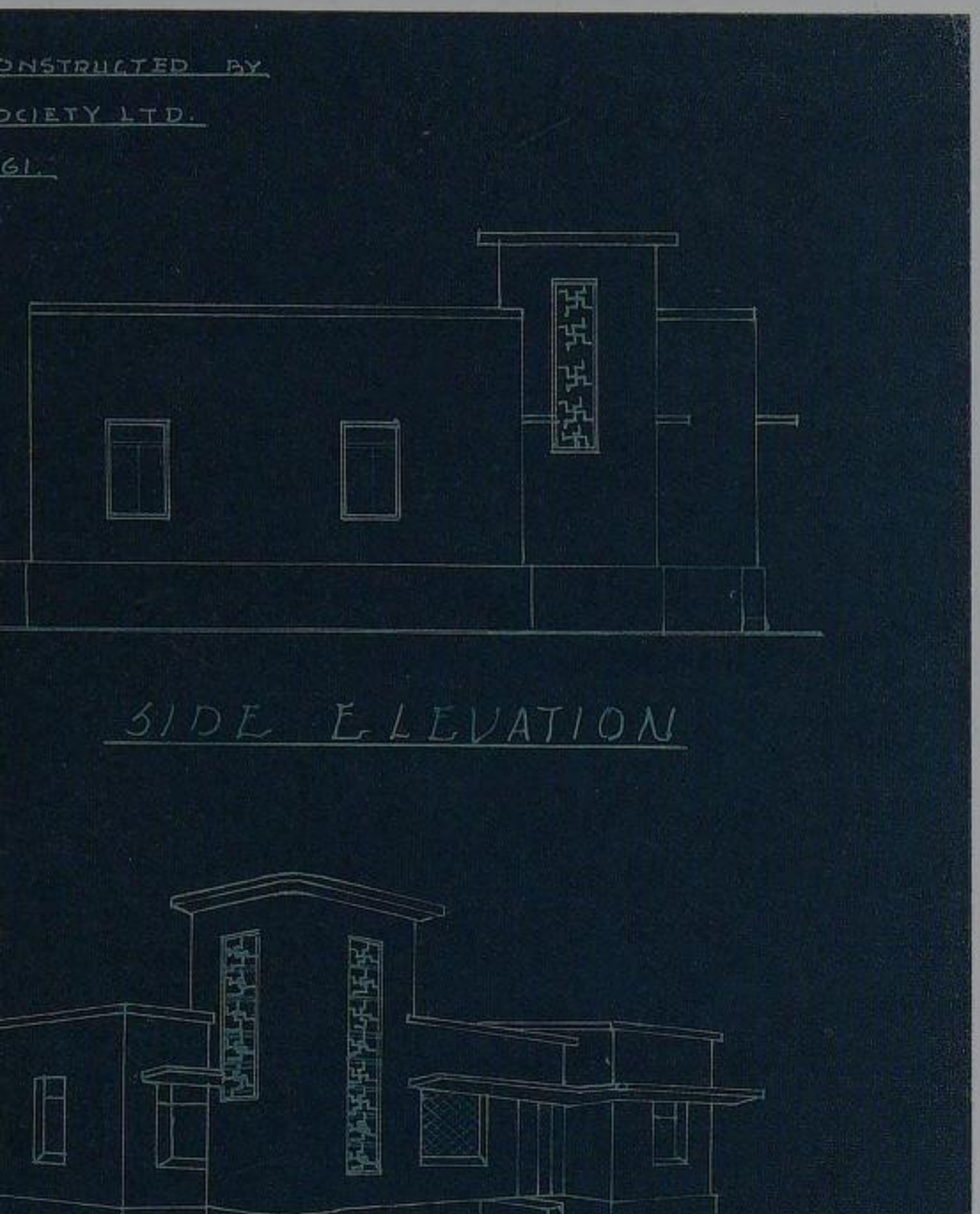
devastated the nearby town of Anjar. Pandit Nehru inaugurated the hospital, amidst local resistence to its location, which was far from the Old City. K.C. Anjaria, considered a popular and upright Chief Officer of Bhuj's Municipality at the time, allotted a large parcel of land behind Khengar Park to the Municipality's staff for them to construct a colony for themselves. This became Ekta Colony (meaning "unity"), the first such to be developed west of Hamirsar Lake.

The new colonies, with their detached buildings constructed in modern manner that was becoming popular in the larger cities of Bombay and Madras, seemed very different from their traditional counterparts. In the Old City, individual houses had been intimately connected to one another in small *falia* clusters, and there were richly complex social and political connections between different communities who had come to live where they did in the course of four hundred years of settlement. Moreover, there were codes of traditional building in the Old City which distinguished one community from another and unified them at the same time; signs that were manifest in architectural ornamentation that had been honed for centuries, and which were a familiar sight in any village and town throughout Kutch. In the Old City, these clusters of housing appeared to relate to one another not just socially but also economically, as though the entire settlement were a gigantic market in which businessmen related intimately with one another.

In newly developing Bhuj, however, there was little hint of the original *falia* arrangement of housing, and none of the traditional signs of community identity which builders had used for generations in Kutch. Orient Colony's new buildings stood separately on detached plots, thoroughly western in outlook as they sought visually to imitate, in their own modest way, fashionable trends in the modern Art Deco; and although residents of the first few colonies seemed bound by tradition and tended to form housing societies as though they were an extended family, newer developments were to reflect an individualism and economic independence previously unseen in the city. It was as though residents had been bound together in the 1930s by a common vision to break from the past and modernize, spurred by a common dream of economically emancipating themselves from a restrictive monarchy. In doing so, people had ironically begun to isolate themselves from one other, to ignore those very social and economic ties that had bound them for four hundred years.

How did this physical shift transform Bhuj's syncretic cultures? *What* had changed about the city's aesthetics, its craft-based economy, and its sense of unity? And what parallels lie ahead in the new impatience to reconstruct Bhuj?

Let us consider, first, that new development outside the Old City in the 1960s began to have a profound effect on the traditional construction industry.[46] The old *salaat* community of builders, who for centuries had lived in Salaat Falia and built almost all the buildings in



Above: Elevation for an Orient Colony bungalow, drawn in 1961 by P.K. Vora, consulting engineer.

Above right: Site plan with property divisions for Orient Colony, the first modern-day settlement to be developed outside Bhuj's walled city, in 1961.

Right: Brochure announcing the inauguration of the Bhuj Cooperative Housing Society's first housing development in Orient Colony, dated 15th April, 1962. The new development broke completely from local convention, changing the face of modern Bhuj.

ધી ભુજ કો-ઓપરેટીવ હાઉસીંગ સોસાયટી લ

ભુજ — કચ્છ.

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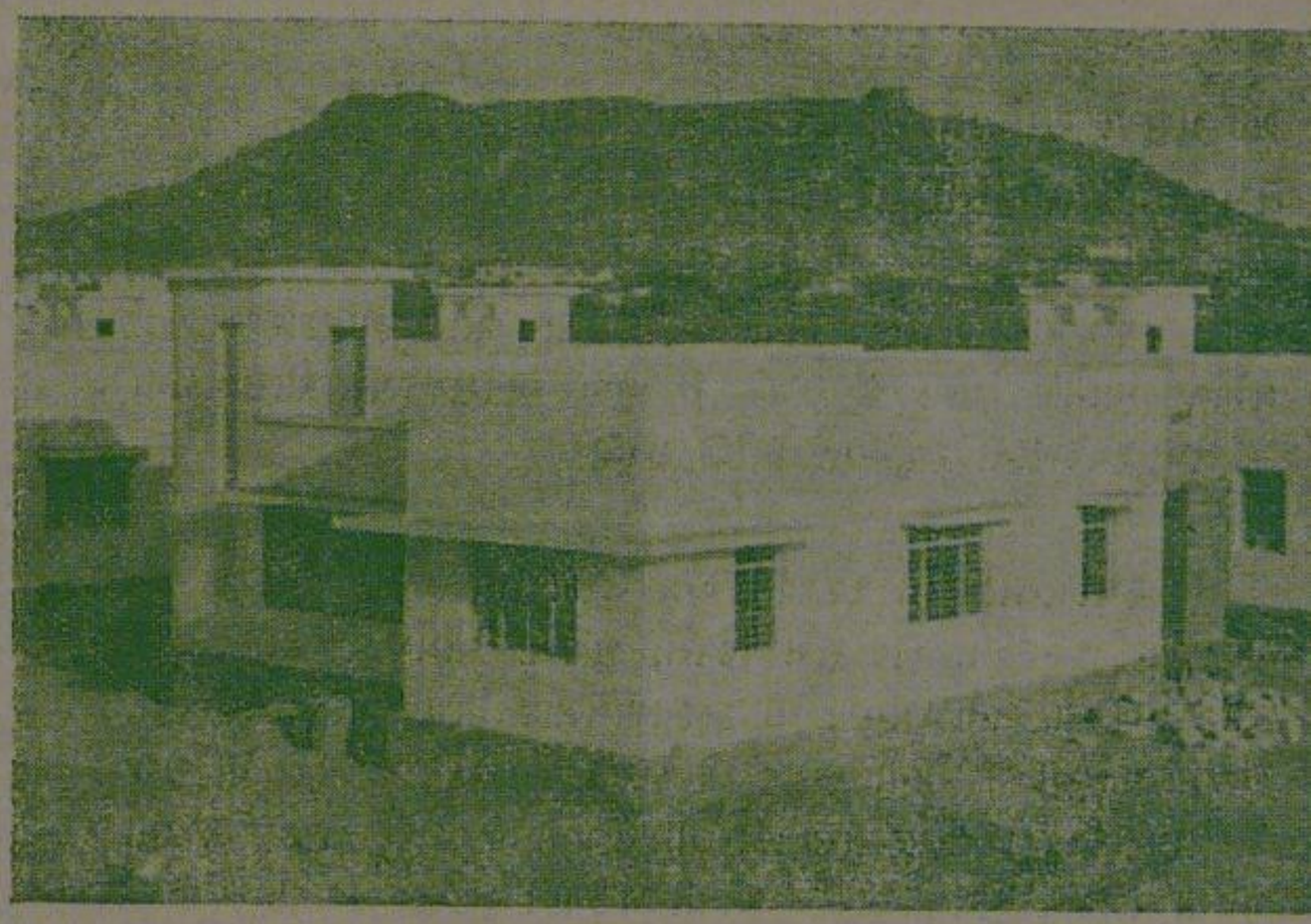


* સોસાયટીના ૨૮ મકાનો પૈકી, એક મકાનનું દ્રશ્ય. *

ઉદ્‌ઘાટક :-
શ્રી બી. જી. ખાબરે, આઇ. એ. એસ.
સમાહર્તા, કચ્છ જિલ્લો.

સ્થળ :—
ઓરીએન્ટ કોલોની,
કુન્ડાબાગ પાર્કની બાજુમાં,

સમય :-
સવારના ૯-૪
રવીવાર

Kumudiniben Pancholi (b. 1943)

I have been concerned about our city and its culture for almost forty years now. I think what you call the "quality of life" has improved since the 1960s, when I was a young girl. When I became Mayor in 1971, I was very concerned in particular about the health and sanitation of the city, particularly because more and more people were beginning to settle in Bhuj (people were coming in droves from places like Rapar in search of jobs) and we had to do something to improve living conditions for an expanding population. I remember that, in 1967, Bhuj had no house-to-house tap water supply. There simply were no water supply schemes at the time. Our lifeline in the old city was its wells: these had to be recharged for us to draw water, and we were invariably dependent upon the rains for their recharging.

I think the city really began developing very quickly in 1970, and then the pace of development accelerated soon after the Indo-Pakistan war, when we were flooded with refugees and there was a general unrest and nervousness in the air, with people moving from smaller towns like Rapar and Anjar to Bhuj in search of jobs and a sense of security.

Hospital Road began developing soon after 1970. Up until then, the entire tract of land in the area was considered an extension to the 19th-century British Camp. When the General Hospital was constructed nearby soon thereafter, the name "Vijaynagar" was given to the area as the land belonged to Maharao Vijayarajji. Colonies thereafter sprang up in quick succession, with people beginning to buy land outside the old city. After 1972, Bhanushali Nagar was the second colony to be developed. This earlier used to be called Nirmalsinh-*ni-vadi* (his farm). But even lesser members of the Royal Family were beginning to sell off their land in areas surrounding the old city, which is how colonies like Vijaynagar appeared.

The city was very quickly changing, because people needed more space and there was a great deal of pressure on private land. In 1970, permission was granted to demolish the historic fortifications circling the old city. Pranlal Shah opposed demolishing it. Later, in keeping with the law, three to four kilometres of land were brought under the Nagarpalika's jurisdiction in terms of its rules and regulations regarding street development and the obtaining of permission to build.

There were no apartment buildings in the very early 1970s. That boom in construction really occurred sometime beginning in 1974, I think, with developers responding to many people who did not want to commute from Bhachau and Rapar to work at day jobs and who wanted more permanent housing in Bhuj. I think this boom changed the face of the city. Up until then, buildings had been a maximum of two stories in height. And well into the 1960s, buildings were still being built in the traditional manner by our local masons from three

different communities; the *salaat*, *kanbi*, and *manjothiya*, who were expert in construction and who have now basically been absorbed into the mainstream construction business.

So in 1971 we began with water and sanitation. We put in place the drainage for the satellite village of Bhujodi and its tubewells. Engineers at the time had thought that water from these wells would be available only for ten years, but today, after thirty years, it is still available from the same site, and is actually a matter of research right now.

I think with the city expanding at the rate it was, there were bound to be changes in the overall social system. For instance, in 1960, when Lalan College came into existence, college education used to cover four years; it was shortened to three in the early 1970s. The Bharat English School had been established in 1964. In earlier days, the school had been functioning on the rental premises of the Kachchhi Leva Patel School. But then a few of us – Navalsingh Jadeja, his colleagues, and I – got together and founded the Bharat English School. In 1972, the Bharat English School was renamed St. Xavier's School. On its division, Dr. Morabia established the Bhuj English School, which is just opposite the Rotary Club today.

We tried to develop markets that would be more accessible to all Bhuj's people. Up until then – as you probably know – the traditional markets in Bhuj accommodated largely the moneyed castes, that is, the Nagar Brahmins, the Jain Vanias, and the richer tradesmen, such as the Sonis. These groups monopolized the pricing and distribution of goods, and invariably attracted niche clienteles. To counter price discrimination, Amritlal Desai, Maneklalbhai Shah and I developed Apna Bazaar in 1971–1972. We set it up basically so that the public would buy their grain, medicines, academic books, and other essential commodities at a fixed price. We set it up on a "no-profit, no-loss" basis.

There was always this sense of a strong community spirit, which is now disappearing because social customs are changing so quickly. Community boundaries were very strong, but the trend is reversing these days. For example, many Sonis used to live in Pipla Falia and Kansara Falia. Most Muslims were at the time living just inside Sarpat Gate and near Bhid Gate. Harijans used to live in Harijan-*vas*, where the jail is currently located. There were no inter-caste marriages in those days. People would marry within their own communities. There were *samuh lagna* (community marriages), a system which originates from the Rabari practice of getting married in a *gokuliya lagna*. In those days, after a death in the family, the entire village would dine together. Now this practice is on the decline. Even inviting relatives and associates for meals after a death is on the decline.

Celebrations and festivities in the 1970s were about everyone coming together. The *tazia* festival was also celebrated with pomp. Hindus and Muslims of Kachchh celebrated festivals in their own style, and there was much harmony between the two groups.

Bhuj since at least the 17th century, suddenly found themselves competing for jobs with skilled labourers imported from elsewhere to construct Bhuj's new buildings.[47] In order to survive in the cut-throat market economy of the 1960s, these builders were forced to adopt new technologies, new ways of building based upon an aesthetic completely alien to the time-tested Kachchhi model. Construction methods in the new Bhuj would now follow principles accepted throughout the rest of India, and the age-old socially-prescribed system of building a *falia* by following strict scriptures which mandated both the neighbourhood's physical layout *and* its aesthetics seemed irrelevant in what appeared, to the *salaat* builder, at least, to be a clinical, ritually bankrupt set of principles.

As a result, the *salaat*'s traditional knowledge of construction and ornamentation all but disappeared, and with it went a certain familiar, uniform Kachchhi aesthetic associated with the Old City. The important thing to remember is that the old ways of building involved unwritten codes that had to do with unified standards of construction *and* ornament, while the new building mania in the 1960s threw aesthetic caution to the winds, in effect giving builders a free hand to mould buildings, and, by extension, entire neighbourhoods, in any shape or form. Ironically, then, by introducing new building codes, the city appeared to have relaxed its aesthetic standards and transformed itself visually into a city no different from any other in India.

There were other provocations for a change in the city's culture. Bhuj's expanding commerce, beginning with the black markets of the Second World War and ending, for example, with Apna Bazaar's egalitarian development in 1971, brought new goods and new technologies of production into old markets.[48] The introduction of mass production as an economic standard did away with old processes of production whose painstaking sense of craft work had sustained Bhuj's craft economies for centuries. New high-heeled shoes, the allure of chiffon, the ubiquitous plastic chair, and the Amitabh Bachhan–inspired hairstyle all seemed to set new aesthetic standards of consumption in the early 1970s. As a result, each trading community, much like the *salaat* builder, decided to "adapt and adopt", relinquishing the builder's old craft and turning instead to retail sales even in the Old City's markets. The old economic interdependence between craft communities, including that of construction, and the interdependence between the *falias* where communities had lived in the Old City, began to rapidly wane.

In reaction to expanding markets and colonies in the newer parts of Bhuj, a resurgent development began occurring within the old city's fortifications, as its traditional markets sought desperately to out-rival their competition. Expectedly, competition for commerce induced a new competition for more space; driven by escalating real estate prices in Vaniawad and Saraf Bazaar, developers began to seek new ways to make a profit in the old city. One way would be to build commercial complexes at the old city's fringe, along Station Road, New Station Road, and the old, familiar bus-stand. Another way

would be to tap hitherto residential areas in the old city and aggressively transform them into commercial property. Thus began an ambitious programme of commercial redevelopment, which greatly altered the ambience of *falia*s, encouraging new trends in high-rise construction that would challenge the Darbargarh's seductive outline, and rapidly alter the old city's slowly crafted image, forever.

Unfortunately, development seemed to be worsening over the years, and it characterized much of the city's urban development in the decades leading up to the present. From a strict code of construction and ornamentation, which had for centuries regulated both the form *and* aesthetics of neighbourhoods, Bhuj's development seemed to degenerate into a chaotic hodge-podge of buildings designed with no regard for either proportioned aesthetics or principled development regulation. One reason for the lack of a grand design is the fact that urban regulation, then and now, had not addressed the city on a larger scale. Indeed, urban legislation remains mired in the specificities of individual private property, treating each building, as a unit aesthetically serving only itself, with no consideration of how each building should relate to its neighbours, or to the overall skyline. This, a legislative oversight, ignores the possibility of an urban "design" for cities, that is, a larger aesthetic and functional scheme which tends to be the norm in cities elsewhere in the developed world.[49] This is perhaps why the Bhuj of today appears much like any other city in India – a mix of incongruous buildings sadly devoid of sentiment and soul.

Maharao Madansinji inspecting the new Lalan College campus during construction.

Designing a new sense of neighbourly identity

Fortunately – to give Bhuj's forefathers due credit – that soul was alive and well elsewhere in Bhuj, and to rediscover it we must revisit the late 1930s. Even as new Bhuj aspired to Pandit Nehru's vision of the thoroughly modern metropolis, interesting experiments had already begun occurring to bridge the gap between tradition and modernity in Bhuj's satellite village of Madhapar. This example is particularly relevant to the project of designing new colonies in Bhuj, where the tussle to modernize yet capture the essence of community should consume any sensitive architect or builder in the years to come.

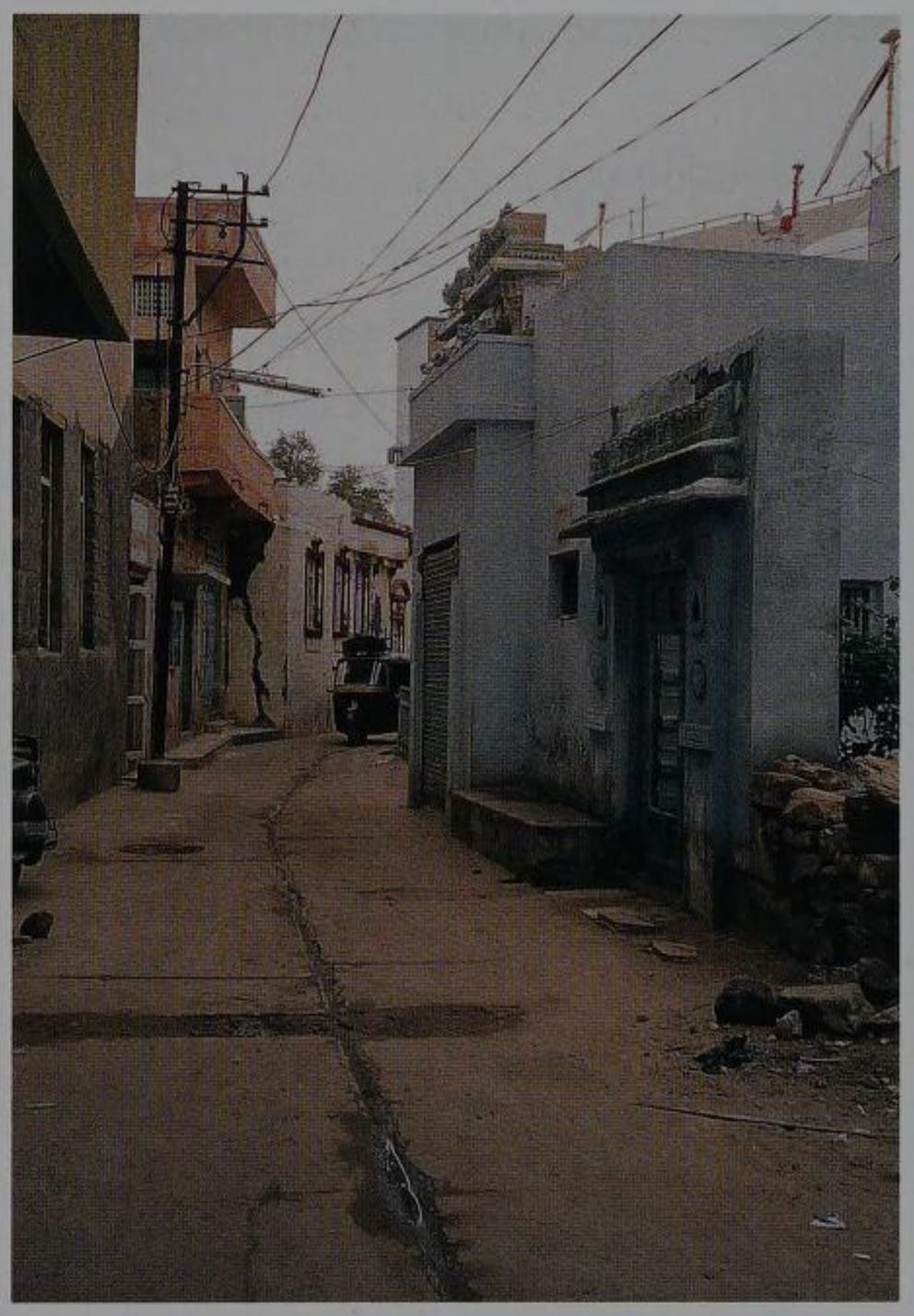
In the maelstrom of political upheaval in the late 1930s and early 1940s, much before the development of colonies outside the Old City had begun to take place, there was already a growing premonition amongst residents and the Kachchhi Prajakiya Parishad that the flourishing black markets of the war years that had sponsored new waves of in-migration would soon put pressure on local job markets and in due course change the city's very face.[50] Bhuj would have to face the hazards of a quickly modernizing world; the uncertainties which Independence and demands for more liberal development policy would bring; and the very real disjunction between the identities of an expatriate Kachchhi and his or her resident counterpart in Bhuj. There was also criticism, of the fact that those who lived away from Bhuj had amassed great wealth which they most likely banked elsewhere, and which could easily have been re-invested in Bhuj itself. There was, in other words, a growing sense of what we might today call a "crisis of dislocation" particularly in Bhuj, something rather like the dilemma in which many residents of Bhuj found themselves after the 2001 earthquake.

This "crisis of dislocation" produced a curious paradox such that many people felt the need to return again to their traditional ways of living – and this is why Madhapar becomes a very interesting study in neighbourhood-building and a lesson for the future as plans to build Bhuj's new housing colonies take shape in the long term. Members of the Kachchhi Prajakiya Parishad proposed, in the late 1930s, that diasporic Kachchhis with connections to Bhuj reinvest in the city, expanding its markets and shaping a new township adjacent to the old settlement of Madhapar, to accommodate both in-migrants and older settlers who had moved away from Bhuj to Bombay, Calcutta and Madras during Khengarji III's reign. The kernel of this township already existed in the form of several houses organised along a main street, but their preliminary arrangement would have to be expanded and better planned so as to essentially retain the Old City's character even as it tried to look thoroughly modern.

The old village of Madhapar, now known as *juni vas*, lay 12 kilometres to Bhuj's southwest, and its history predated even Bhuj's. Beginning in the early 1940s, Kachchhis living outside Bhuj began to converge on Madhapar to build a new section (now known as

Above: A typical courtyard house in the village of Madhapar, on the outskirts of Bhuj.

Right: Madhapar's *navi vas* was laid out as an orthogonal system of streets in the 1940s.



the *navi vas*) based upon the British New Town and London rowhouse models. While engineers conceptually laid out a preliminary grid of streets in bits and pieces, future residents commissioned new houses designed in the old manner, this time choosing to *adapt* the traditional Kachchhi house, so that it took on a new rowhouse format to conform to the new street grid. This began to illustrate a new aesthetic paradigm that would combine the new English orderliness of the grid with traditional spaces characteristic of *dela* in the Old City. And so, the typical house in Madhapar, from 1942, looks much as it would have looked in the Old City prior to development in the 1960s, if one considers, for example, old neighbourhoods adjacent to the Vora-saat-*no-delo* which have fortunately survived the earthquake, but its streetfront is uncharacteristically modern. Two important distinctions between the Old City house and its Madhapar counterpart lie in the latter's spatial layout: the *baithak*, *aangan*, *rasoi*, *medhi* and *ordho* are arranged in

a line in the typical Madhapar rowhouse, to save space; and people now meet each other, not in courtyards, but by talking to one another across *otla*s.[51]

Madhapar, then, presented the traditional builder community with considerable opportunity to explore adapting an old-world aesthetics to new housing. Built to a great extent by the Waghela *mistri* and *suthaar* communities, the *navi vas* resembled a facsimile of traditional, ornamented beauty, sadly missing in latter-day high-rise construction in the Old City. *Suthaar*s seemed to have rejuvenated ornamentation on doors, windows, columns, and, indeed, entire facades of houses so that the visitor felt as though this ancient art had not entirely died out.

Of grand gestures and a myriad details

The development of new colonies which broke from tradition, and then Madhapar's shift *back* to it, presents the interesting dilemma of finding a new face to the Bhuj of tomorrow. Considering the tumult that is the city's complicated history, what can one say about the nature of change, and the transformation in people's lives as they look for new development opportunities?

As the following chapters reveal, the sense of historical craft which slowly shaped Bhuj and its various traditions has always been vulnerable to two types of change. One is the kind of gradual change that we have witnessed in this chapter, in which political developments and social currents slowly moulded the city's face over four hundred years. The other kind of change is of the more sudden variety, such as when an earthquake or flood occurs, scarring a city's beauty and producing entirely new economic contours that were unthinkable prior to the disaster. Perhaps the city grew slowly and painstakingly as both a grand gesture and a kaleidoscope of myriad details. Both changes merit more detailed study in order to facilitate decisions about the question of development that is to come.

A COLLABORATIVE CANVAS

In years past, the city of Bhuj must have been an *aesthetic* experience, a thing of beauty, slowly, logically, crafted over hundreds of years; a fact that is evident in sepia photographs of its architecture and planning, as well as through its manufacturing and trade markets.

This fine articulation only confirmed the tremendous effort which went into crafting details, bit by bit, and layer after layer, over four hundred years. In the drive to reconstruct Bhuj in the space of just a few years, it is essential that we consider this critical fact as we piece together conversations with residents, builders, and craftspeople whose recollections become extremely important to uncovering the motivations behind city design. Doing so will point contemporary craftspeople to the *principles* which underlie the various forms of expression in design choices, and will also provoke thought on the reasons why people invent, copy, and advertise aesthetic and functional templates.

Bhuj's urban development appears to have actually been linked, symbiotically, to the development of the arts as a whole. As the city physically grew, it created more and more opportunities for artistic and economic

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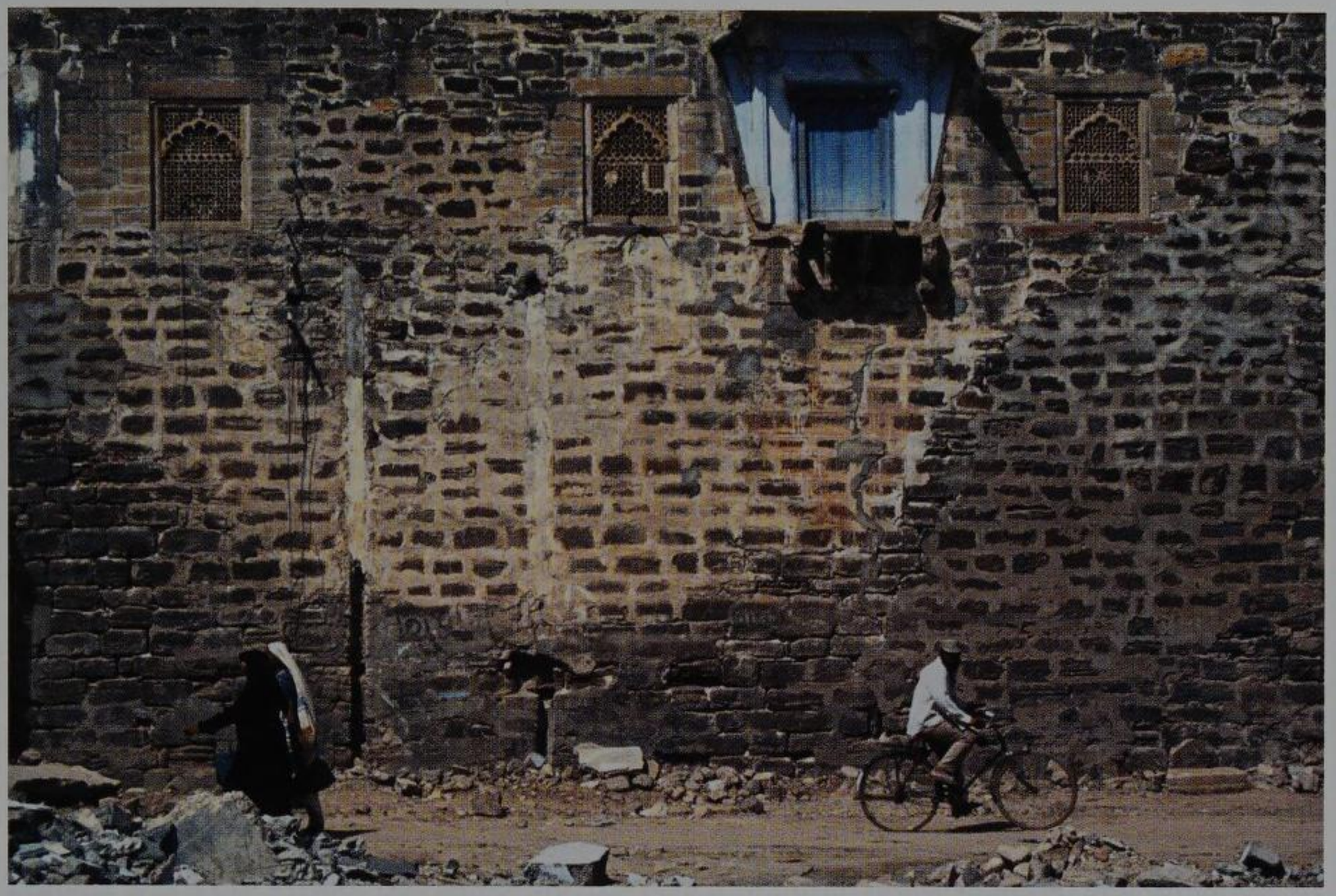
Left: Sculptural reliefs of Dutch sentries, one with bugle and another sporting a musket, on the facade of the Darbargarh's *nagaara khana*. Such traces of an 18th-century exchange with the West are rare.

Below: Entrance to the Swaminarayan Temple in Bhuj, 2003.



Inner fortification wall to the Darbargarh complex, 2002.

expression, welcoming new artistic trends which may in turn have influenced methods of building construction. This chapter explores the idea that new methods of building construction might have shaped the very idea of "neighbourhood", owing to a particular community of traditional builders and artisans called the *salaat*s who lived in the *falia*s of Bhuj, up until the earthquake of 2001.

This connection between building and the arts may explain the elaborate ornamentation of historic buildings; the logical prescription for a network of *falia*s in which people practising certain crafts were economically tied to one another; the typology of neighbourhoods; and the patronage of art and architecture. It appears that painting, music, dance and the art of building construction in Bhuj are intimately connected. They may actually have been tied together in a fascinatingly elaborate contractual system of economic inter-dependence and social harmony, to which there are tantalizing but inconclusive clues. The contemporary significance of such analysis lies in our acknowledgement that the arts were for centuries an essential economic instrument in this city's evolution, and must henceforth be considered a tool for urban development, not merely an appendage to it.

The illustrations and plates which follow are an experiment in visually reconstructing this fundamental economic interdependence between communities practising the arts over a 400-year period of urban development – which may, perhaps, have begun with Khengarji I's arrival in Bhuj.

The art of building: construction and ornament

It is possible that Khengarji's settlement in Bhuj attracted the first of the *salaat* (or *Gurjar kadiya*) community of traditional builders, specialists in construction who for centuries lived in Salaat Falia, a neighbourhood south of Bhid Bazaar and towards the far north-east of the Old City, and who possess a fascinating pedigree.[52] The forefathers of the *salaat*s are reputed to have fled harassment by the King of Marwar in the 15th century, and to have settled in Jamnagar, migrating eventually to Kachchh in the 17th century. Their closest kin might possibly be the *salaat*s of Kathaiwad and Kadiya in Gujarat.[53] In the *salaat*s' oral tradition, migrants came equipped with several skills, including woodwork, stone-cutting and carving, and design templates, particularly for temples and houses. Later, towards the 19th century, they are reputed to have specialized in designing houses, leaving the work of ornamentation to the *suthaar* and *mistri* (stone mason). The

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Kachchhi labourers building a railway station in Adampur, Punjab, photographed sometime between 1910 and 1912. Labourers from the region were often commissioned in other princely states for their services, the most famous being the construction of the Victoria Terminus Railway Station in Mumbai, completed in 1888, and the Howrah Bridge in Kolkata, which employed hundreds of Kachchhi *salaat*s, *mistri*s and labourers. An inscription in Devnagari script at the back of the photograph reads: "In the Hissar, Punjab, there was a factory in 1910–12, from where Adampur Railway was made [sic]. This photo is from there." The scribe lists the names of labourers as well: "(bottom row) Mavitra Madhavji Raghu, Banu Raghu, Rua Vaghji Raja from Anjar; (top row, from right) Kaka Hirji Raghu, Naran Ratna from Nagalpur in Anjar Taluka, wearing a topi; and Vadilbhai Keshavji Madhavji, aged only fourteen."

*salaat*s maintain that up until the introduction of modern construction methods in the early 20th century, they practised a unique system of construction based upon a mix of scientific and religious principles, and that these were applied not just to houses but to the *falia* neighbourhood as a whole. At the core of this belief system was *vaastu shastra* and a strictly observed set of social customs which decided how houses should be built for people of different communities. The *salaat*'s contribution to architectural construction throughout Kachchh parallels – in terms of the sheer volume of their work – the contribution by *sompura*s to building temples throughout the rest of the country.

Understanding how the *salaat* worked gives us fascinating clues to how *falia*s came to be designed the way they were; a visitor to a typical *falia* in Bhuj read specific, visual signs designed into its architecture to identify it. Sometimes the *salaat* distinguished between his clients' social and religious identities by designing the layouts and fenestration of their houses differently. For example, it is said that the *bania* house would feature an inordinately large, open courtyard to accommodate horses and cattle, indicative of his mercantile wealth; while the Lohana house was designed to typically feature several doors to let in fresh air, as the Lohana was a blacksmith by calling; and the Nagar Brahmin house featured low windows so as to allow outsiders to present themselves directly from outside. Jadeja houses, by contrast,

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An old house in the village of Desalpar, Mundra Taluka.

featured high plinths to ensure that women did not stray outside the confines of a raised platform, and could not be seen easily from outside the house.

The *salaat*'s concerns for beauty and ornamentation are perhaps one of the most interesting aspects of his career. His work was closely tied to that of the traditional carpenter, the *suthaar*, who learned to refine his ornamental techniques and may have been inspired by a mix of influences, including Ramsingh Malam's legacy (see "Politics, Patronage and the City") and the conventions of Rajasthani woodworking, besides the stone mason who produced ornamental stones to be used in building houses. The *salaat* was more preoccupied with the symbolism of design and its relevance to specific communities: he designed first using universal rules as codes or signs to distinguish between communities, most houses and *dela*s (gates to *falia*s), for example, featuring *gokhala*s (ornamental niches), carved into soft stone on either side. These were designed to accommodate earthen lamps in the days before street-lights came to Bhuj. But he knew also from his scriptures that the houses of Jain *vania*s are said never to have featured these ornamental niches, because they attracted insects to the burning flame, which would have gone against Jain religious precepts. These design guidelines were followed not only in Bhuj but elsewhere in Kachchh, such as the equally historic towns of Kothara, Kera, and the old *jagir* of Dhirnodhar Than in Kachchh, where much of the original architectural fabric dating from the 18th and 19th centuries still remains.

The design and construction methods employed by the *salaat* were interesting not only because of their sensitivity to the customs and codes of different client communities, but because they based their work on archetypal plans for houses and temples drawn from memory. The *salaat*'s oral tradition, and the scant record which exists from the 19th century, shows how he adapted traditional schemes to his client's needs, following a strict mathematical formula which rarely varied. The *salaat* also applied the universal principles of *vaastu*, which determined the direction and use of each part of a house. Apprenticed to a *gaidhar*, or chief architect, the *salaat* learnt his craft entirely from experience, and it is believed that his only tool may have been a foot ruler that he would carry on-site to measure out the dimensions of houses with a practised eye. The *salaat*'s traditional drawings are today works of art themselves, and are rarely available. The

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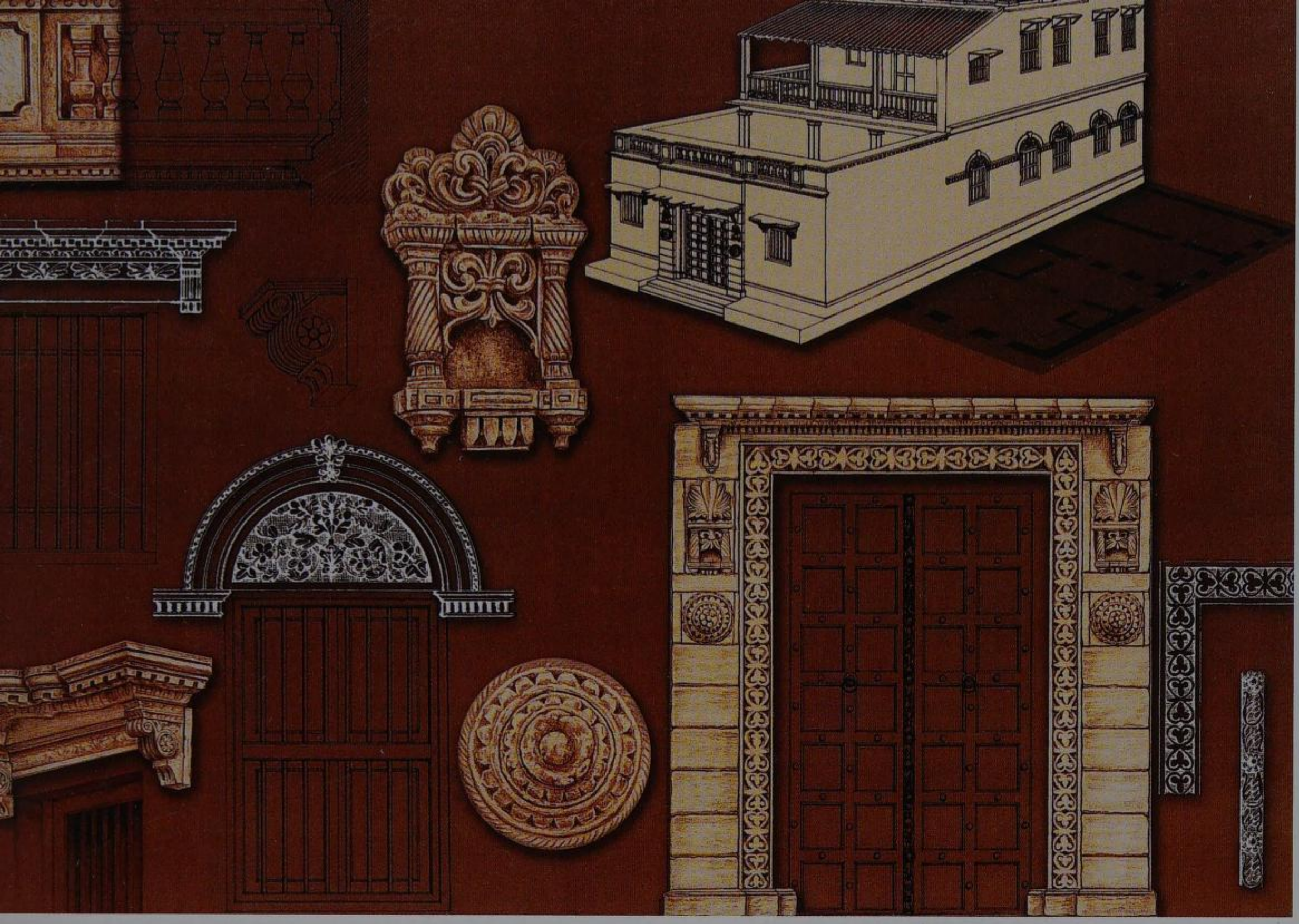
Facing page:
Above: Typological study of a typical urban Kachchhi house in Bhuj, owner unknown. This particular specimen was demolished soon after its documentation in 2001. Several decorative elements remain common to houses throughout the region.

Below: Typological study of a house belonging to Ratnakar Dholakia, close to Nagar Chakla in Bhuj. The house, built sometime in the mid-19th century, has now been demolished, but was typical of courtyard housing of the period.

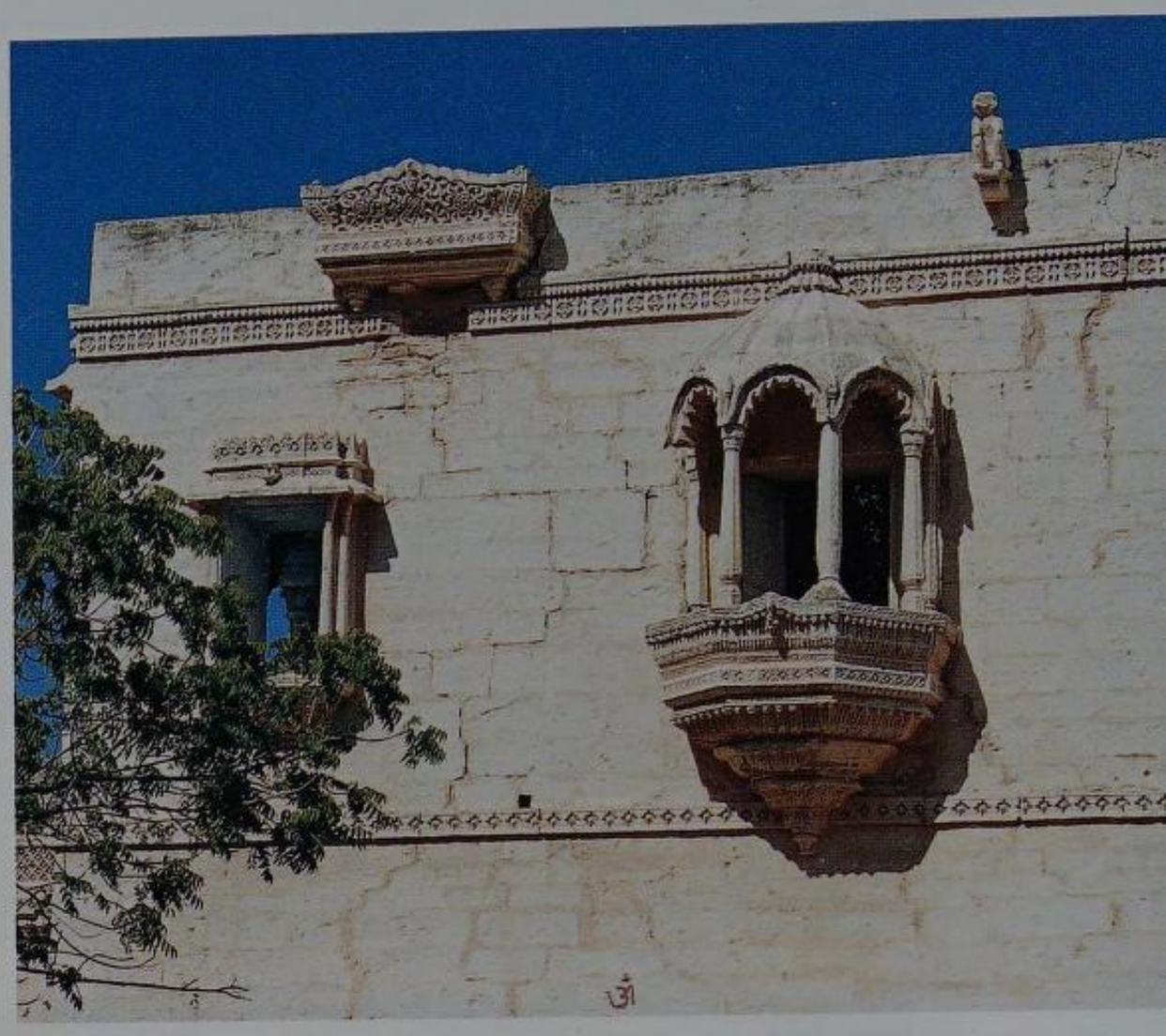


Above: Courtyard to the *jagir* of Dhirnodhar Than, Kachchh. Photographed in 2003.

Below left: Detail of a limestone *jharokha*, *jagir* of Dhirnodhar Than, Kachchh, 2003.

Below right: A decorative bracket from which to hang lamps, carved as a dancing girl with lute. *Jagir* of Dhirnodhar Than, Kachchh, 2003.

Facing page:
Entrance door to a house in Vaniawad, Bhuj, photographed probably in the 1950's. The house no longer exists, nor does the rich tradition of decorative carving in stone and wood, which graced the houses of the wealthy.



Left: Jharokha adorning the entrance door to a house in Kothara, Kachchh, 2004.

Above: Facade of a house outside the *jagir* of Dhirnodhar Than, Kachchh. Note how assymetrical the fenestration and architectural elements appear on the facade, compared with the perfect symmetry of elements on the facade of the Fateh Mohammed-*no-Khordo* (see drawing on page 187). It is possible that this reflects a builder's attempt to experiment with architectural elements, although the building's facade is not yet the epitome of symmetry and proportion.

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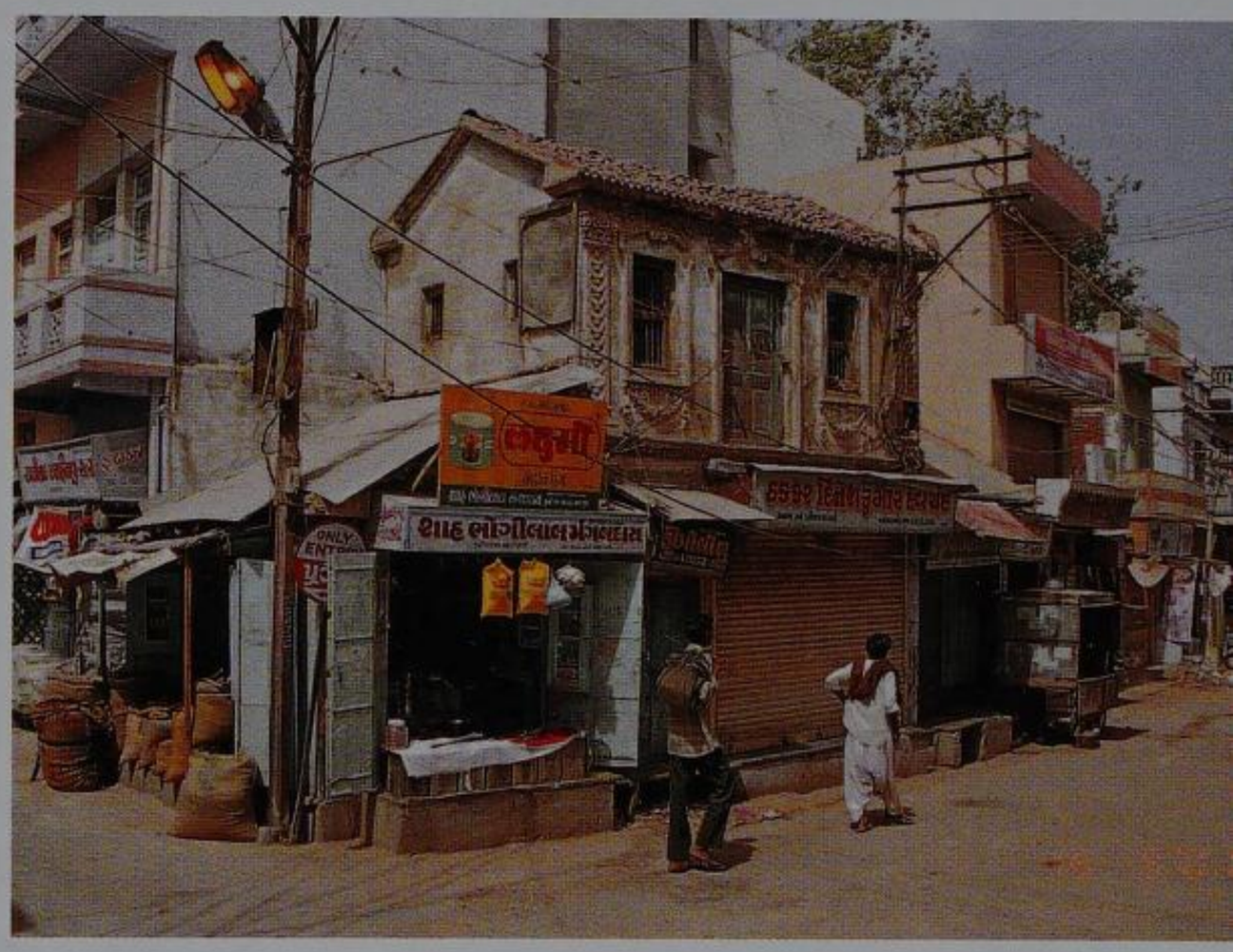
community itself has largely forgotten the art of traditional building, having disposed of much of its records, and they became experts in temple construction, much like the *sompuras* or contractors in the mainstream construction industry in Bhuj.

From where must the *salaat, suthaar* and stoneworker have learnt their art of ornamentation and symbolism? Who, or what, were their sources of design inspiration? This in itself is a complex story, to which we only have a few preliminary clues. It is possible that for a period of two hundred years (between Khengarji I's reign in the mid-1500s to Lakhpatji's patronage of the arts in the mid-1700s), the *salaat* and stoneworker experimented with borrowing from traditions of ornamentation prevalent in the *havelis* of neighbouring princely states in Rajasthan, as well as from what is known today as Gujarat. Lakhpatji's patronage of the arts in the mid-1700s in particular may have spurred their creativity to new heights, encouraging the *salaats* to experiment with the design of their buildings, all the while encouraging

Right: Facade of a shopfront house at the intersection of Danda and Saraf Bazaar streets. Built sometime in the late 1800s, this building appears in many early photographs of royal mounted processions down the street, in which its facade appears to be plain compared to its comparatively modern baroque detailing. The building survived the earthquake in 2001.

Above: Detail of facade.



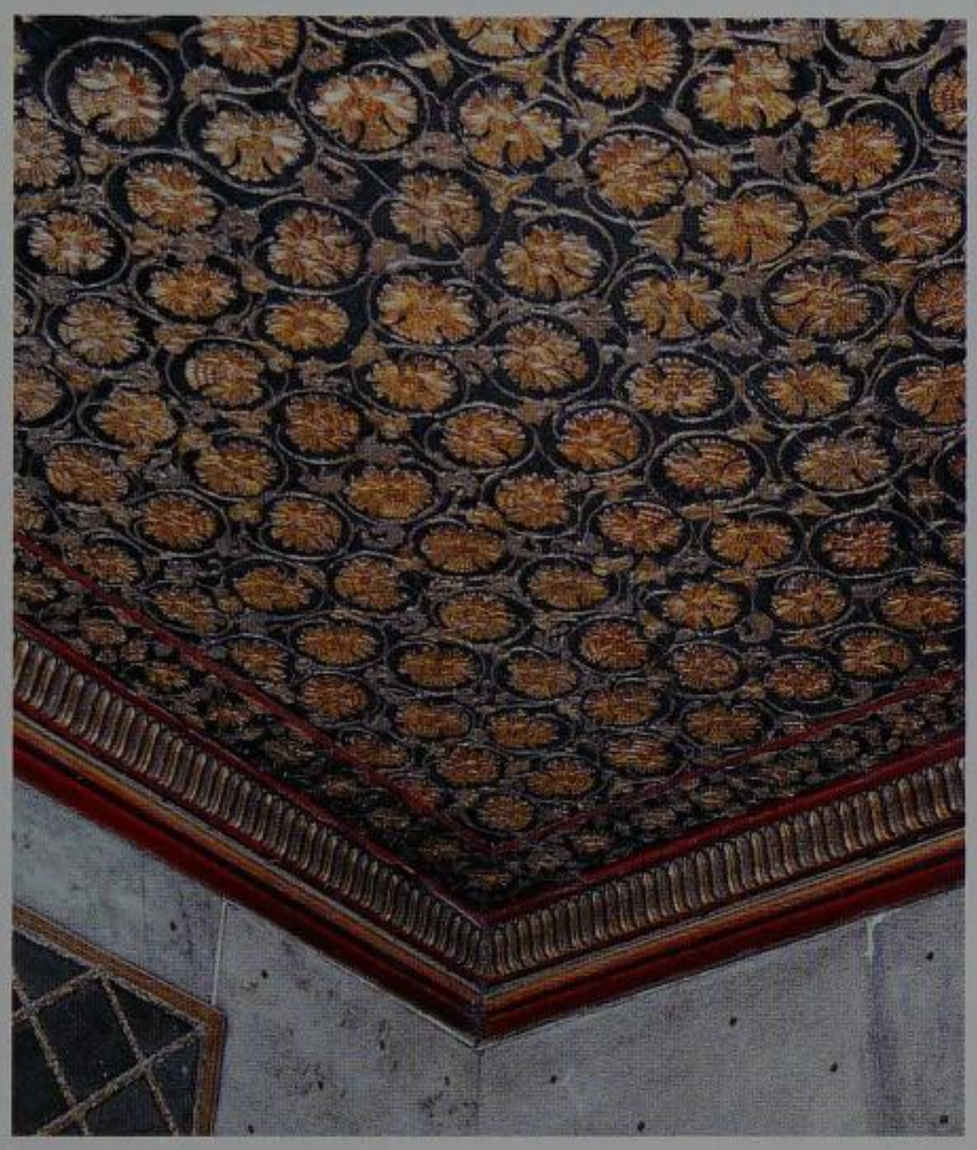
stone workers under their direction to refine typologies of ornamentation until these became exemplars of proportion and detailing. Several historic monuments and houses in Bhuj featured *jharokha*s (projecting canopied balconies), *chhajja*s (lintels), and stone carving on their facades from the 18th century onward, and were copied even up until the turn of the 20th century. The best examples of this profusion of ornament were the institutional buildings in Patwadi, Vaniawad, and select houses and monuments in the old city and outside. Although many of these survived the earthquake of 2001, they remain in severely dilapidated condition and merit urgent restoration.

Ramsingh Malam's return from Holland in the mid-18th century heralded new trends in architectural sculpture and decoration, but it is difficult to attribute his influence to

Royal infantry, probably Nagpanchmi procession, returning from Bhid Chowk along Saraf Bazaar past the Vegetable Market en route to the Darbargarh. Photograph c. 1935.

Above left: Cornice and arched window surround on a mid-19th-century *jamaat khana* in Bhuj.

Above right: The building survived the earthquake in the walled city, and remains an example of a 19th-century locally crafted interpretation of Classicism in the treatment of its columns and cornice.



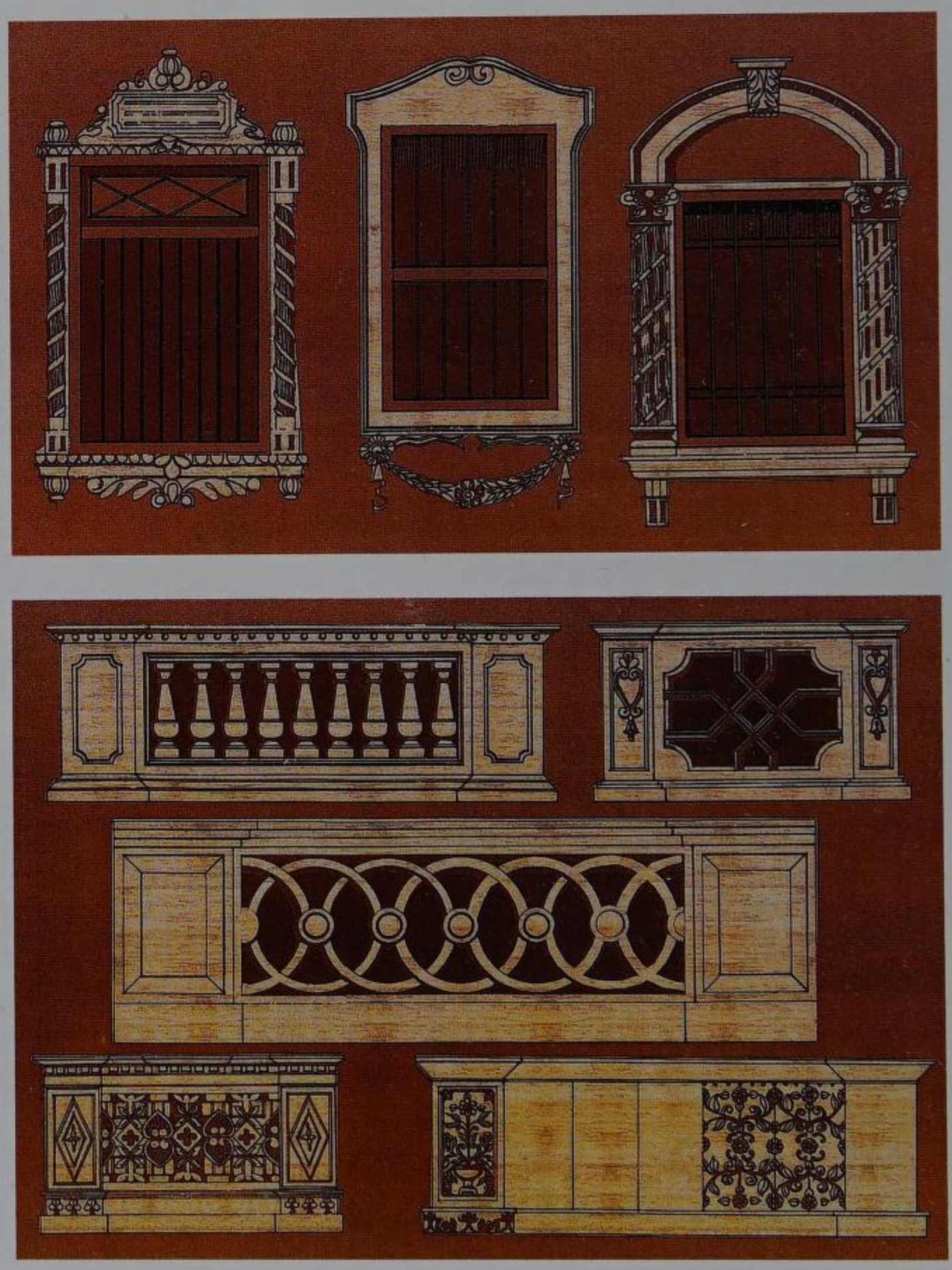
Centre left: The stucco and gilded ceiling of the Aina Mahal, photographed in 2003.

Centre right: Detail of mirrors in the Reclining Room of the Aina Mahal, Bhuj. 2003.

Below: Ceramic tiles produced by Ramsingh Malam in the Dutch style. 2003.

any one building in particular; however, in the *salaat* oral tradition, it is believed that Malam hired *salaat* apprentices to replicate patently Dutch figures depicted in a manner reminiscent of the vernacular Baroque style on the ornamental facades of houses. Many buildings in Bhuj, beginning with Jamadar Fateh Mohammed's 18th-century mansion and tomb, for example, and ending with the sculpted facade of the Jubilee Hospital and the Darbargarh's *nagaara khana* gate, displayed an uncanny resemblance to the 18th-century European rococo in their elaborately curlicued window surrounds and delicate tracing. Could this have been a vestige of European influence on builders of the time?

When the British arrived in the late 18th century, they brought with them entirely new construction techniques, and an ornamental tradition drawn from the neo-Classical architectural style that we can more clearly attribute to a source which found expression



Above right: Typological studies of windows with surrounds that are local interpretations of baroque detailing.

Left: Faux arches and geometric patterns adorn windows on an old house in Bhuj. 2001

Below right: Studies of balustrades on verandahs. 2002.

later in the mid- to late–19th century, in buildings which have fortunately withstood the 2001 earthquake. These buildings are now landmarks in the centre of the old city, and merit preservation because they mark an important aesthetic transition in Bhuj from the insular Kachchhi vernacular to the more cosmopolitan, and eminently adaptable, colonial style of ornament and architectural design.

While this created an intriguing fusion between east and west in architectural ornamentation, the layout of neighbourhoods and the vernacular Kachchhi house witnessed little change in Bhuj, with the result that the *salaat* remained secure in his business of constructing buildings using age-old rules well into the 20th century.

The *maholaat*, or royal residence, in Mandvi, Kachchh, was an exquisite example of the decorative Kutchhi "high style" in facade ornamentation, built sometime in the mid-18th century as a summer residence for the Kutch Royal Family. Compare the reliefs of sentries with bugles and rifles on its facade with the purportedly Dutch figures depicted on the gate of the *nagaara khana* in Bhuj (see p. 74). The *maholaat* was eventually donated by Maharao Madansinhji to the Gokuldas Tejpal Girls' School. In its original state, it housed the *mardana* (men's quarters) on its first floor, and a zenana (women's quarters) on the second. Khengarji III preferred staying at the *maholaat* when visiting Mandvi.

A royal carriage, probably not commemorating the annual Nagpanchmi but a more private royal affair, wends its way past the late–19th century Vegetable Market in Saraf Bazaar.

Above right: A house in Vaniawad locally interprets vernacular forms of the Classical Revival style in its pedimented entrance and cornice. Several houses in Bhuj sported a local fascination with "foreign" architectural ornament.

Above left: The Agency Bungalow in Bhuj, in the area that is now the District Collector and Magistrate's compound. Probably photographed in the early 1870s.

Left: Study for a column capital, probably late–19th century; taken from sketchbooks in the possession of a descendant of the local *salaat* community in Mandvi, Kachchh.

Kamaagar art, the *suthaar*, and the *salaat*

Although the *salaat*'s skills may have been pre-eminent in the construction business of the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries, evidence suggests that his knowledge of building and ornamentation might not have been isolated or exclusive from the other arts in practice at the time, and that he leaned heavily on the expertise of master *suthaar*s and painters to complete his buildings for him.[54] *Suthaar* carpenters were known for their wood carving, and were employed by the court to make furniture for the royal apartments and to equip the houses of rich families in the Old City.[55] They excelled in the production of ornamental chairs, ceremonial fans, and elaborate doorways, as these objects required the skill to fashion wood parts in the shape of a thin, cylindrical bore, evidence of which we have in a royal portraiture from the late 19th century. Several royal portraits depict the subject standing against a chair or lounge, which never appears to change in picture after picture, and which may have been ornamentally carved by *suthaar* craftsmen and upholstered by Mochi embroiderers (see pages 57, 100, 103).

The key proponent of ornamental decoration in Bhuj, and perhaps the real catalyst in shaping the *salaat*'s and *suthaar*'s aesthetics, may have been the Kamaagar artist, an

enigmatic figure about whom very little is known today. What we do know is that the *kamaagar* community of Muslims lived in Kamaagar Falia (not far from Machhi Pith and Khattri Chakla) in Bhuj, and that at one time they were known for making shields. Their art reached its apogee in the mid-19th century, after which they no longer had a presence in Kachchh, having migrated to Karachi, Pakistan, during Partition, where there are now three hundred families still practising their genre of painting.[56] By the early- to mid-19th century, however, the Kamaagars had firmly established themselves as practitioners of wall painting in Bhuj, and were widely employed throughout the city and in regional towns to paint mythological and folk scenes on the inner and outer walls of houses. By all accounts, they must have done quite successfully for themselves, for although there are very few remaining illustrations of the art in houses in Bhuj, their work continues to be visible in many places elsewhere in Kachchh.[57]

One intriguing possibility is that the *salaat, suthaar* and their colleague the *kamaagar* artist shared a financially and aesthetically beneficial relationship, so that each gained from the other's commission and fame as they went about building and decorating Bhuj's houses. Elderly *salaat*s, in Mandvi, maintain that soon after a building was constructed, its owner would ask the builder to recommend a suitable *kamaagar* artist and a *suthaar* whom they could commission to paint decorative motifs along their walls and carve wooden doors and windows for them. These recommendations could have indentured the *kamaagar* artist financially to the builder, which raises the question of whether there was indeed a signature pattern of building to match the signature hand of a particular painter.

The transferability of art motifs and the relationship between trading *falia*s

Kamaagar art seems to have shared an aesthetic sensibility with several other art forms being practised by communities in 19th-century Bhuj, and it had an economic and practical reason for doing so. These other art-producing people included several communities and their respective art forms. There was the *maniar* community of ivory-carvers, woodworkers and bangle-makers who once lived in Maniar Falia in Bhuj, (and who now only specialize in the art of bangle-making and ply their trade in Danda Bazaar); the *mochi* community, who once lived on Mochi Street and were famous for their exquisite embroideries and shoes; the practitioners of *zardozi kaam*, who once lived in Haveli Falia; and the *soni* community, who continue to make ornaments of silver and gold in the Soni Bazaar on Saraf Bazaar Street.

One way of extrapolating a connection between these several groups would be to visually interpret how the *kamaagar* artist's ornamental drawings might have been shared and adapted by different craft trades throughout the city. Plagiarism in the design process was probably rampant in the 19th century, as designs were being adapted to suit the requirements of new global markets for exotica, which had begun to flourish soon after the Industrial Revolution. Stylistic parallels can be extrapolated between jewellery and

A *mujra* performer, accompanied by Lungha musicians in a Bhuj studio, from a stereoscopic photograph. Probably recorded in the late 1880s.

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silverware, wall painting, illustration, architectural ornament, furniture design, and textile weaving, industries which had a presence in the old city and enjoyed the patronage of the Court. The illustrations in this chapter show how the *kamaagar* artist's drawings may either have directly influenced several other art forms, or borrowed certain motifs from fields as unrelated as the performing arts. We have various comparative illustrations of this to support such an interpretation: in 19th-century photographic portraits of people in Bhuj; photographs of houses; and common objects used in daily life.

Above left: Dancing girls, from a pen and ink sketch, probably late–19th century, Bhuj. Compare this with a depiction of the nautch girl on page 41.

Centre left: Trompe l'œil detailing on the facade of a house, probably *kamaagar,* in Kothara, Kachchh.

Below left: Kamaagar decoration on the facade of a house in Kera, Kachchh.

Below right: Kamaagar wall painting from a house depicting *jastimal* wrestlers. Abdasa, Kachchh.

Above left: Kamaagar paintings on the walls along the first floor of the main complex of buildings, which constitutes the *jagir* of Than in Kachchh.

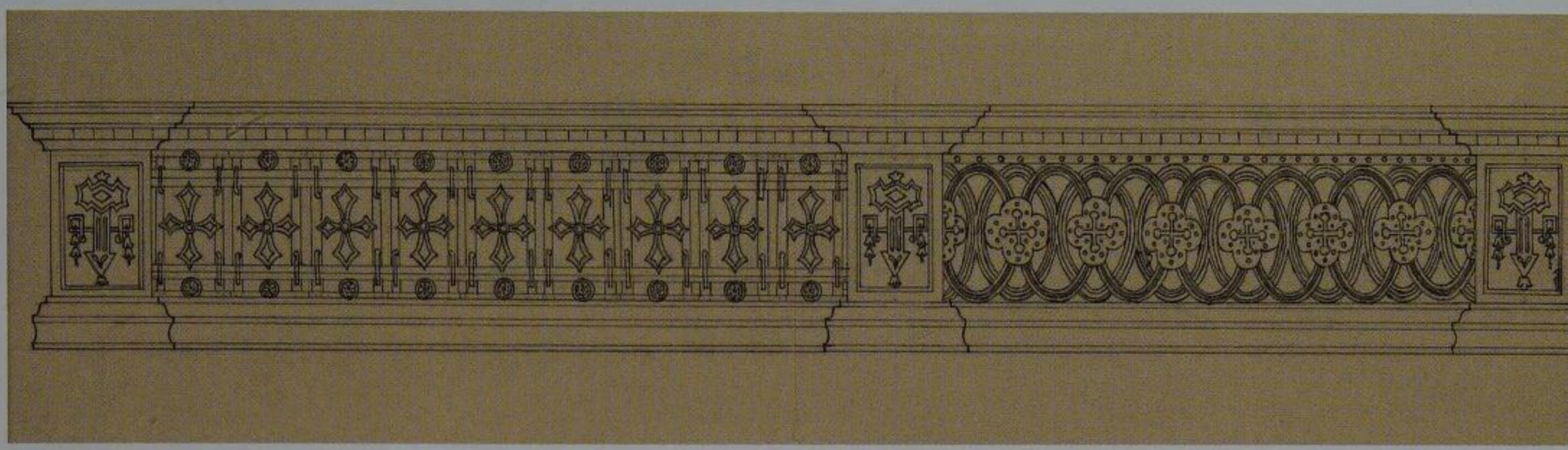
Above right: Kamaagar wall painting from a house near Kothara, Kachchh.

Below: Kamaagar wall painting, *jagir* of Dhirnodhar Than, mid-18th century, Kachchh.

Above left: Narottambhai Khetani Salaat, the oldest surviving *salaat* in Mandvi, and his wife. 2003.

Above right: Modern-day *mistri*s (carpenters) in Mandvi discussing design templates for wooden brackets. Descendants of *salaat*s and *mistri*s have turned to more lucrative and less time-consuming work for the 21st-century construction industry.

Of particular note is the fact that all these communities – barring the *salaat*s who lived rather separately in the Bhid area – were based in close proximity to one another in the northern half of the old city, and the *falia*s in which they lived were invariably located very close to Danda and Saraf bazaars. Machhi Pith in particular, where the Jethi, Kamaagar and Khattri communities intersected, was a vibrant confluence of streets where goods and knowledge were easily exchanged. Moreover, even though the *salaat, suthaar* and stone cutter lived a separate existence far removed from these other trades, communication between them and the *kamaagar* painter might still have continued, given the fact that they were all closely tied to one another as partners in the house-building business and the decorative trades. And since the *kamaagar* artist was also the illustrator of type designs experimenting with and documenting typological designs derived from Mughal and Persian standards, his interests in ornament coincided greatly with those of the makers of Mochi *bharat* and silver-enamelled *meena karigari* (see page 106), both of which traditions had been influenced to great extent by European and Persian practises. This produced, most probably, an osmosis: the combined composition, production and marketing of art may have inspired stonecutters and carpenters to design in a particular way; and their work, which was very visible on the street, may have represented a kind of public catalogue to silversmiths, blacksmiths and artists.



Above: Pen and ink drawing of a veranda balustrade from a 19th-century *salaat* sketchbook, Mandvi, Kachchh.

Below: Pages from a *salaat* or *mistri* notebook, with notes and a study for a bargeboard or balustrade, 19th century, Mandvi, Kachchh.

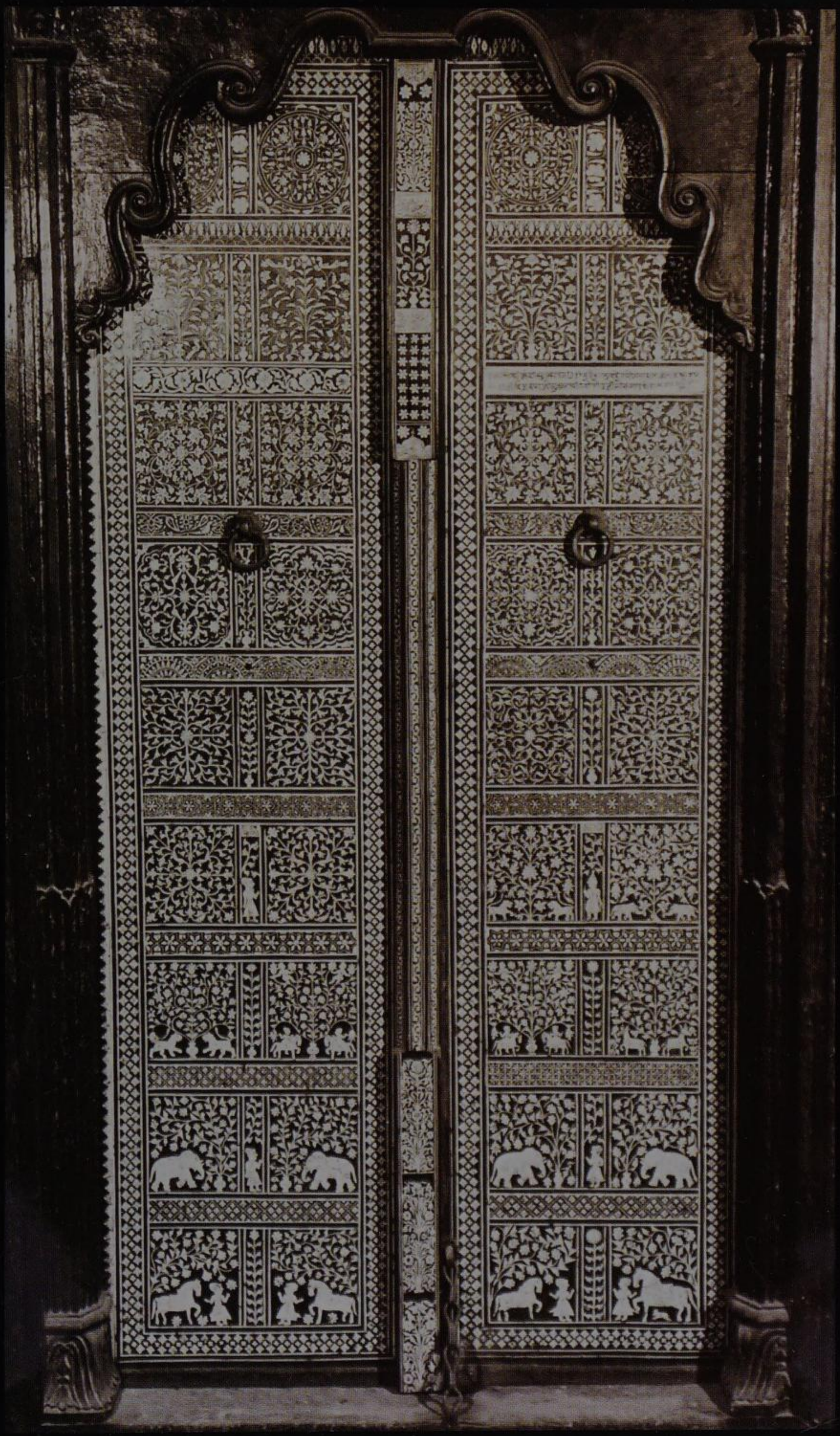
The ivory-carver in Maniar Falia

The ivory-carvers from the *maniar* community lived in Maniar Falia, not far from Ghanchi Falia and the Bhabhan Shah Pir Mosque, in the old city's north, and were renowned for two hundred years for their ivory bangles and wood carving. Their work was linked with both the contruction industry, as is evident in the detailing of wood columns and doors on mansions in Bhuj, and the more refined decorative arts, where the Maniar craftsman produced everything from bangles to the inlaywork in doors, working occasionally with the *suthaar*. Their combined efforts might have been influenced by the *kamaagar* artist's intricately ornamental renderings.[58]

Above: The Sharad Bagh Museum displays a pair of elephant's tusks, among other Kachchh memorabilia.

Left: A rare example of mid-18th century wooden columns and bracketing on the porch of an annexe to the Fateh Mohammed-*no-Khordo* in Bhuj.

Right: Detail of a door carved in wood, Bhuj, probably 1940s.



Door carved in wood and ivory, Aina Mahal, showing horsemen and elephants on a hunt in pursuit of tigers. An inscription above the door records the fact that it was made by Maade Suthar in 1708 for the princely sum of 400 *kories*.

Maniar Falia has now largely vanished as a well-defined neighbourhood and a home to an entire community. Although there are still a few families living here after the 2001 earthquake, most *maniar* families have now graduated, much like their *mochi* brethren may have done at one point, to the more lucrative and fashionable trade of making and selling wooden and glass bangles in Saraf Bazaar. Their shops are still located, however, opposite Vora Bazaar not far from the Old Vegetable Market.

Embroidery in Mochi Falia

The Mochi community of embroiderers are found all over Gujarat, and include both Hindus and Muslims. In Bhuj, they lived and practised their uniquely intricate art in Mochi Falia, south of Saraf Bazaar between Vora Sheri and Kansara Bazaar, from the 18th century onward. There was a time when part of Saraf Bazaar was in fact known as Mochi Sheri, and considered distinct from the larger bazaar street. In their original calling, this community of artisans were cobblers who had specialized in stitches that were strong and fine; their particular technique would eventually be adapted to the art of embroidery, and manifest in a particular stitching method that is otherwise also known as *taanka* or *aari bharat* (the cobblers' stitch). It is a matter of speculation why cobblers may indeed have turned to the art of embroidery: perhaps stitching had become financially more lucrative than shoe-making, or cobblers had chosen to adapt to changes in royal patronage.

Studies on the history of textiles specific to this region suggest that the Mochis migrated from points further north to the Kachchh region after the Mughal Empire had begun to decline, and that their motifs are derived from Mughal and Persian sources.[59] Certainly, in Bhuj, they appear to have endeared themselves to the Maharao's court over the course of two to three hundred years until the turn of the 19th century. Some of their work bears uncanny resemblance to the floral designs proposed by Ramsingh Malam on his return

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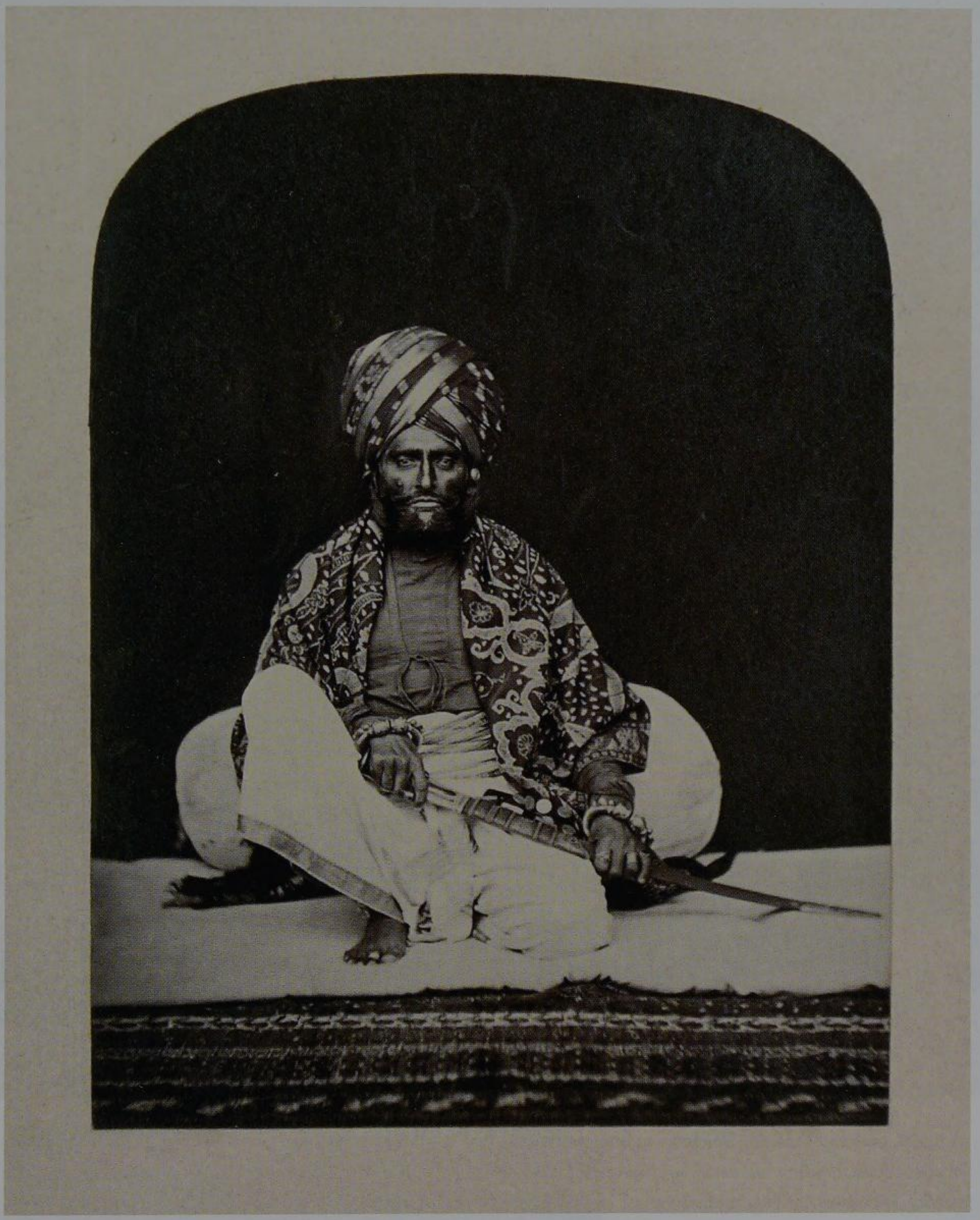
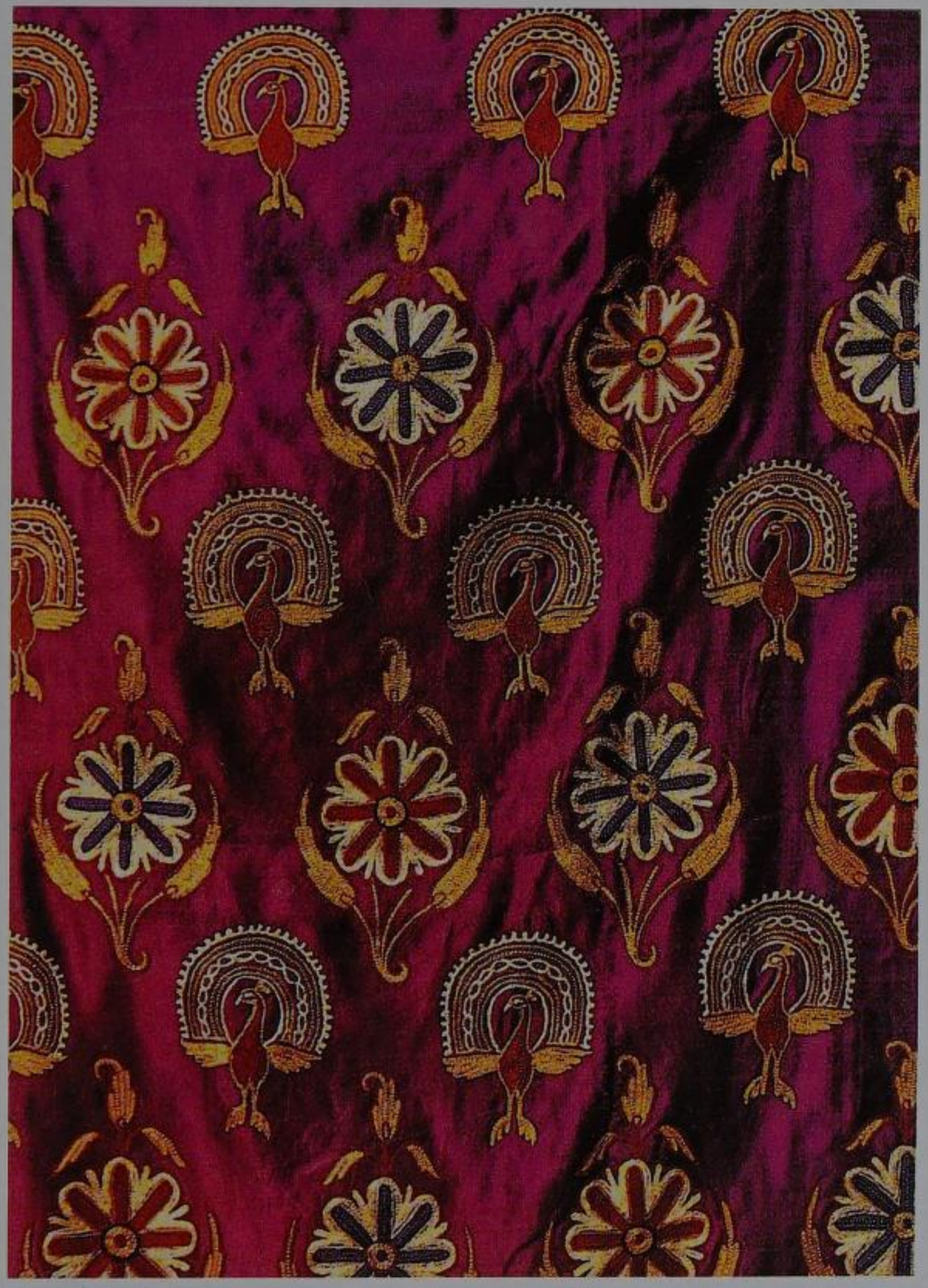
Study in watercolour and pencil, early 20th-century, Kachchh. Only its provenance in Kachchh suggests that the motifs on this piece may be related to Mochi work, although it seems closer to patently western textile designs.



Portrait of a Kachchh *jagirdar* or nobleman wearing a woven shawl and bearing a sword, probably Bhuj, 1880s.

A priest, possibly a visiting Vaishnav in Bhuj, important enough to have been portrayed by the State Photographer in the 1880s, holding a *gaumukhi* embroidered glove, stitched in *mochi bharat*, which contained sacred prayer beads. The priest is wearing a shawl of *mochi bharat*, for which the *mochi* community of Bhuj were renowned. Mochi workers were – as the name suggests – initially shoemakers whose unique stitch, suited to leather binding, came later to be creatively applied to textile design, with the result that the *mochi*, sensing a new market, changed from his traditional calling to the work of embroidery in the 19th century. To begin with, the *mochi* worked freehand, an indication of his considerable skill, only later resorting to the easier method of working his hand over block-printed stencils. Such technical shifts happen constantly, even today, and are manifest, for example, in the aesthetic crossover from traditional materials to plastic and other synthetic materials in 21st-century art and architectural production.



Above: Detail of *mochi aari bharat* on silk, professionally embroidered on a printed pattern, Kutch.

Left: Detail of *aari bharat* on silk, Mochi craftsmanship, Kutch. *Mochi* embroiderers would be summoned to the zenana, where they were required to stretch fabric out on stretchers, after which the royal women chose their colours for their pieces. These pieces were considered everyday wear, worn a few times and eventually "handed down" to ladies-in-waiting.

Above: Pen and ink drawing of a canopied swing, mid- to late-19th century, Kutch, possibly *mochi.*

Previous pages: The infant prince Godji, Khengarji III's younger son, surrounded by attendants. To his right is Abdullah *mian*, a *siddi* East African. The throng includes a mix of attendants from Kathiawad and Kutch. The portrait reveals the richness of the courtiers' clothing, particularly the styling of turbans which distinguished one community or region from the next. Attendants often wore tunics embroidered with zardozi and *mochi bharat*, produced in Bhuj to became the city's signature export to Africa and Britain in the 19th century.

A royal hunt, detail from a coloured pen-and-ink drawing, Kutch, possibly late 19th century.

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from Holland, and which were detailed by painters in the 19th century. These momentary illustrations appear to support wider assertions that Mochi artwork drew inspiration from Dutch botanical paintings in the Mughal courts of the 16th century.[60]

The process of stitching *aari bharat* required consummate skill, and is now close to becoming extinct. Using an *aar*, or perforated, hooked needle fed with thread from a little notch near its point, the embroiderer would wear a finger top, tying the thread together in a chain stitch pattern that was at once delicate and strong, and which produced remarkably painterly patterns that often recalled the flowers, leaves, animals one would find in mid-18th century European Baroque decoration on crockery, upholstery, and clothing; or the equally intricate Persian and Mughal weave and miniature painting, which anchored the paisley and the curlicue as basic design referents. The cloth on which the *aari bharat* was woven was typically imported for generations from China and points west through the port of Mandvi.[61]

The *mochi* stitch, curiously, seems to appear very little in royal photographic portraiture from the late 19th century; more often, it appears unassumingly in the clothing worn by members of the court, including servants and attendants; or in the livery of a distinct class of royal priests, rich noblemen or traders in the employ of the Maharao. Such work could have lost royal favour toward the turn of the century, the first step in its economic demise in Bhuj. Its 20th-century value in the Kachchh region's economy remains largely uncharted: embroidery of this sort is no longer practised, exhibited or sold in the markets of Bhuj, but local not-for-profit organizations such as Shrujan have begun exploring the potential to revive its basic techniques, working with the local *mochi* community to reveal the contemporary significance and adaptability of their designs.

Silver-smithying, *meena karigari* and silver engraving in Soni Bazaar

Meena karigari, or the art of enamelling gold and silver objects, has been practised in Bhuj since the mid-18th century, when Ramsingh Malam brought the art's process and technology to Kutch.[62] It has always been a very lucrative business for the residents of Soni Bazaar.

Engraved silver and *meena karigari* work was consistently patronized by the royal court, and may have been strongly linked to the stylized ornamentation and production of weaponry to equip the Maharao's bodyguard and armies, as the *kamaagar* artist's renderings of the

Above left: Jewellery seen adorning the wearer was almost invariably of gold. Here, jewellery is offset by zardozi embroidery. Portrait of Maharao Khengarji's younger brother, Bhuj, late 19th century.

Above right: Enamelled scabbard for a dagger, made with gun metal and leather, possibly early 19th century, Kutch. The engravings closely resemble *mochi* decorative motifs.

Left: Studies for a sword scabbard, probably mid- to late-19th century, Bhuj, pen and ink drawing on mounted paper.

Above: Studies for the hilt and scabbard of a sword. Probably mid-to late 19thcentury, pen and ink drawing on mounted paper. Nana Reha village, near Kukma, Kutch, was a centre for ironmongery, supplying the Royal Infantry with weaponry.

ornamentation of swords and their scabbards indicate.[63] The art required painstaking work and considerable attention to the humdrum process of producing and refining enamel from vitreous lumps which had to be cleaned in acid, ground with pestle and mortar in water, and finally refined with distilled water more than two dozen times. The enamel was then heated and applied with a fine brush to the surface of silver ornaments and objects, and fast colours were then added to this still-wet enamel. The object or ornament was then finely polished and again washed in acid to clean it to perfection.[64]

The process of making a single object sometimes took weeks to complete, making it expensive and desirable generally during festivals and large fairs in the city.

The *bajaaniya*, or *siddi* warrior elevated on stilts in the annual Nagpanchmi procession sometime in the 1930s, Bhuj. The warrior's sword and shield would have been forged in the city's smithies operated by the Lohar community, and decorated with silver patterns by the Soni silversmiths in the Soni-Kansara Bazaar in Bhuj in the 18th and 19th centuries.

Pen and ink drawing, possibly *mochi*, 19th century, Kutch.

Bandhani tie-dye printing in Khattri Chakla

The art of *bandhani* tie-dye printing on cloth is not unique to Bhuj, but has enjoyed a strong local presence in the city for perhaps two hundred and fifty years or more. Its practitioners were at one time both Hindu and Muslim Khattris, but the trade is now almost exclusively the preserve of several Muslim families living in the vicinity of Khattri Chakla. In the tie-dyeing process, cloth is first pinched at regular intervals and tied before it is dyed, so as to create a collage of circular spots which characterize its design. In the late 19th century, *bandhani* was used not only by women but also as cloth for men's turbans, and could be seen even at the royal court, as photographs from the period attest (see pages 99, 109). In its modern usage, the textile forms part of the Gujarati bride's *ghar chola* at weddings, and may also be worn as silk *odhni*s by wealthier men.[65] The community enjoyed considerable patronage from the Court at the turn of the 19th century, and was valued throughout the Indian subcontinent and as far as Zanzibar.[66]

Jaykishanbhai Meghnani (b. 1930)

I came to Bhuj in 1947 from Karachi, at the age of 17. I remember vividly a cinema called Kalapi Talkies behind the Treasury at Mahadev Gate. Although popular at the time, it was closed down when the Modern Talkies was developed in 1948 off Chhatti Bari. The last show was at 12 o'clock. The auditorium was powered by a generator, since electricity was scarce. How thin the cinema's walls must have been, because we could hear the generator rumbling away in-between quiet moments in a film! And, for a schedule, you went down to the Old Vegetable Market, where hoardings were strung along the iron girders inside, as though the place were an exhibition!

Bhuj was a place for literature and the performing arts in the 1940s. The old Brajbhasha Pathshala (or the Gadhvi School, as we knew it), where the first Bank of India branch would appear, was located in an old red-stoned building at Patwadi Gate. Shambhudan Gadhvi was then the school's headmaster. Maharao Lakhpatji, who was fond of Pingal literature, had established the school in the 1700s and many students who studied the genre went on to recite professionally at the Aina Mahal. After his death, this monument to Pingal literature was closed down.

In the 1950s, the Municipality sponsored cultural programmes in the Gangabasaheb Middle School, where my father was first appointed a music teacher in 1948, or at the Alfred High School. There used to be literary get-togethers. Dinmanirai Vora, Prabodhbhai Mankad and a few of us began a theatre company which often performed along the lake's edge just off the bandstand, or in the Alfred High School's playground. I was stage manager for Kulinbhai Desai's play, Bala Jogan, on the life of Meerabai; she was played by a man in falsetto.

I began the Sangeet Vidyalaya (the music school) in 1953. Hirjibhai Kotak, the chairman of the District Local Board and one of Madhapar's most respected residents, helped me hire a place in Danda Bazaar for it. Kutch's song, *Munji matrabhoomi ke naman*, was first composed by Niranjan Bhagat at this institution (I composed its score in raga *bhairavi*), and recorded to a theme by one of Bhuj's best qawwaals, Ramzaan Qawwaal. Later, we organized a number of cultural activities in the bazaar, including mushairas and *kavi sammelan*s attended by the likes of Prangiri Goswamy, Mahendra Sameer, and Chandubhai Shukl. After some time, the Local Board Authority said they couldn't support the school any longer, so then I began one of my own, in which there were about seventy to eighty students. In those days, I used to wake up at 5 a.m. and go down to Sarpat Gate, where I'd sit on a bridge near the Khari River on a road leading to Rudramata Dam and rehearse my *aalaap*.

In the great tradition of music in Bhuj, we drew artistes such as Pannalal Ghosh, Nikhil Ghosh, Amirali Khan Arab, Pandit Jasraj (when he was still unknown!), Talat Mehmood, and Ashraf Khan to packed crowds. We were teaching instruments such as the harmonium,

sitar, tabla, violin, dilruba (a kind of Kutchhi *taoos* or *surindo*, akin to the sarangi) at my school, and Bhuj once again became a centre for cultural instruction and performance. Mrudulaben Antani, Kishorebhai Buch, Kirti Hathi and Hariprasad Antani's daughter sang light music. Jayant Khatri would drop in, as would literary sorts like Gordhan Sharma, Lalji Maheshwari, and Jenghes Oza.

Dance came into vogue only in the mid- to late-1960s. My father pioneered the instruction of Kathak. The Open Air Theatre, which was constructed in 1967–1968, close to Ghanshyam Nagar, hosted many *raas-garba* competitions, with participants including the Jhankar Mandal and *mahila mandal*s from many communities. I used to judge them. I remember Shri Vipula Shah, an exponent of dance in Kachchh, who was very knowledgeable about traditional *garba*s. Sadly, although All India Radio regularly invited artists in the 1950s, it ran short of funds and programming for music and dance came to an end.

I remember clearly a Khadi Gramodyog exhibition, held at Jubilee Ground in 1951. There was a small Ferris wheel for children, and a large expanse of flat ground on which to play football. Vijayarajji had been fond of athletics in his youth, and his grandfather Khengarji III had developed Jubilee Ground for sports at the turn of the century. Jubilee Ground was named to commemorate the Golden Jubilee of Queen Victoria in 1889, as also the Jubilee Hospital not far from Bhuj Jail, which was destroyed in the earthquake.

It's sad that we have forgotten how much sweet water used to be available around the Hamirsar's periphery. Women used to go to Dedaka-vav (the "frog well"), which was reputed also to house djinns. Its water was said to cure tuberculosis. The Indrakshi well on Uplipal Road, next to Zeenat Masjid, had a grille-like frame inside to prevent people from falling into it. Chakki-vav in Ashapura Falia, got its name from the *chakki* (flour mill) in Bhuj which adjoined it. Charkhi-vav, the fourth well I remember, was at Uplipal, near Dr. Mandakini Desai's residence. And Khordavali-vav in Patwadi was another popular source.

Another amusing thought. At the time that the film *Inth Ka Javaab Pathhar Se* was being shot in the Aina Mahal in the late 1950s, the film's director wanted a *mujra* scene. I helped him find the right musical instruments for it. When I got him his instruments, the director suggested that I play a role, to which I agreed. In the scene, the dancer would have to come to me and sit on my lap. While enacting it, the lady protested loudly because the director had wanted that I pull her into my lap rather vigorously. I didn't know where to look; but I got away by telling the director that I was drunk and the script should be altered to reflect my shenanigans, if he didn't want to lose his footage. I remember hearing afterwards that the scene had been entirely successful; not only did the director shake my hand immediately afterwards and told me I was a great artist, but Om Prakash and Raza Muraat gave me a hug, and then even Himmatsinhji Bawa afterwards remarked lightheartedly that I'd come to occupy Lakhpatji's *takht*!

Zardozi *kaam* in Haveli Falia

The practitioners of the rare art of zardozi, or zari, are a national phenomenon: in Bhuj, they once lived in Haveli Falia, not far from Kansara Bazaar and the Moti Vora Falia, and their work reached markets throughout the region of Kachchh and points in the Arabian gulf through the port of Mandvi. The art, which presumably brought the *zardos* worker a rich, exclusive clientele, involved intertwining silk thread with a thin gold-and-silver thread which was then brocaded into patterns on cloth. The actual process of making this gold-and-silver thread required a block of gold-coated silver metal to be beaten into extremely fine strands of thread, sometimes millimetres in diameter.[67]

The tradition in Bhuj went back to the late 16th century, making this particular trade one of the oldest contracts between craftsman and royal patron. Zardozi work has now completely died out in Bhuj for lack of patronage, and because the trade here had to compete with larger production centres such as Surat and Mandvi after Independence. As a result, Haveli Falia has fallen into oblivion, and is known today only in name.[68]

Below left: Zardozi Jain *toran*, 16th century, Bhuj. The work of metal stitching used to be undertaken exclusively in Haveli Falia in Bhuj for centuries. It is possible that Zardozi workers were one of the first communities to arrive in Bhuj in the service of the Maharaos, during the hundred years following Khengarji I's founding of Bhuj. Metal-working was always a versatile craft, applied to the production of weaponry, silverware, and, later, clothing. Although his skills were not directly applied to weaponry, the Zardozi craftsman would have been a precious asset at the Court.

Below right: Zardozi Jain *toran* depicting a dancer, 16th century, Bhuj. Compare this illustration with the dancers on pages 41 and 92.

Portrait of a nobleman at the Court of Bhuj, photographed in the 1870s. He is wearing zardozi embroidery, which was produced by the famed workers of Haveli Falia in Bhuj in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Ornaments of the face were always of gold.

Craft trades and city-building today

My point in summarizing the relationship in design between these several arts, and then linking them to the construction industry in Bhuj over four hundred years, is to emphasize how important it was, in the zeitgeist of the late 19th century, for tradesmen to live and work where they did, close to their markets and to the royal court which patronized them, and where they would either have organized themselves as communities or been organised by the Maharao, with distinctive identities in clearly defined *falia*s. As one of Bhuj's oldest neighbourhoods, then, the Vora-saat-*no-delo* in 18th-century Bhuj would have been built in a manner such that the actual relationship between this neighbourhood and those surrounding it became an economic and political one.

In much the same spirit of exchange, the *falia*s occupied by craftsmen in old Bhuj were their basic unit of identity, organization, and ordinary life. Each *falia*'s occupants shared a complex relationship of social and professional interdependence. In today's terms, that kind of interdependence begs the question of whether it would be important to design new markets and housing colonies to reflect the traditional relationships between the economic trades, in much the same manner as the Kachchh Nav Nirman Abhiyan has now attempted to do experimentally in its scheme to house families in particular configurations in Bhuj's GIDC area.

But is this wishful thinking – even in newly developing colonies that will spring up around Bhuj on the coming several decades? The fundamental logic of living where you work – indeed, living in close proximity to those whose businesses are related to yours, as we have just seen in this chapter – has changed over the decades, because new modes of transport and telecommunication have produced new patrons of craft and produce, changing the economic dynamics which drive their very production and marketing.

Ever since the Monarchy gave way to decentralized markets where the craftsman had to begin competing for attention with artisans outside Bhuj, the stronger, wealthier craft communities invariably survived, while weaker communities, who had depended upon the whims of a local market, went into rapid decline and have now all but disappeared. After the earthquake, this has become even more obvious, demonstrated by the shortage of retail outlets in Bhuj for *bandhani, ajrakh*, and silverware.

Traditional methods of construction, too, have given way to modern norms of building and construction that are now standard practice everywhere in the world. The *salaat* has lost his political advantage to the modern developer lobby with its modern construction vocabulary; and because the *salaat* is no longer an economic force, so also have his friends, the *kamaagar* painter and the traditional *suthaar,* completely vanished from Bhuj's cultural and economic landscape.

So should new housing colonies be designed on the assumption that the thoroughly modern businessman, craftsman and resident in today's Bhuj has no patience for talk of tradition and his old economic associations? What is important to consider, as future colonies develop in Bhuj – is the fact that there were certain principles which drove the development and location of certain communities in a logically defined pattern of neighbourhoods and which, for example, the *salaat* felt comfortable in repeating. One way to alleviate the problem of staccato, piecemeal architectural design would be to reconsider Bhuj's cityscape as a problem in large-scale urban design rather than as a collection of individual projects each isolated from the other. Another way that these principles of community association can be revisited is if they are emphasized by citizens, traders, or craftspeople who will in the future be clients to local builders.

INTERPRETING THE *CAMÉRA VÉRITÉ*

Photographers in *fin de siècle* Bhuj contributed much to recording and shaping iconic images of the city. They documented what, to them, seemed the most important things because they were provoked into representing all that was interesting and unusual about their experience of place, particularly those things which captured their perceptive imagination. The professional photographer's perception greatly contributed to enhancing the value both of the object (the photograph) and its subject, a crucial point to consider as we critically analyse the logic behind the illustrations in this book. The photographs which follow become milestones in an effort to chart the shifting topographies of the developing city, and to plumb the richness and delicacy of its composite culture.

Photographing the city in 19th- and 20th-century Bhuj

Several early photographs in this book were produced by creating negatives on glass.[69] The process was cumbersome, and the materials extremely fragile, and this explains, to a great extent, why photographers in Bhuj chose to record only certain aspects of the city they were experiencing. The photographer had to carefully store heavy, undeveloped plates of glass in a wooden chest to guard them from breaking, along with the emulsions he would need to coat them with. He had to carry such heavy equipment wherever he went, often climbing hills or going up a steep flight of steps to the roof, or risking glass plates getting wet in the rain.[70] Many very early panoramic views of Bhuj were

Muljibhai Gujjar and his camera on camel-back, late 19th century, Bhuj.

printed using mechanical paper techniques.[71] Since these techniques were developed for the publishing trade, they were produced in vast quantities, usually reproduced in books and magazines, but sometimes produced as individual sheets that were most often framed.[72]

Alternatively, some of the most fascinating vignettes of city life in Bhuj were recorded on "stereo cards", which were two nearly identical images mounted side by side on cardboard. When looked at through a stereo viewer, they produced a three-dimensional image. These became popular throughout the world from 1854 to 1938, and were being reproduced in vast quantities.

The illustrations which follow contemplate the city from a distance. In almost every case, the photographer's broad sweep of places and their particular histories is framed by landmarks which appear consistently in the photographer's cross hairs; for example, the Bhujiyo Hill or Prag Mahal's Clock Tower, noticeable in almost every composition, tucked into the background. Occasionally, the photographer surmounts these landmarks, obtaining for us rich, new landscapes which record the complexion of Bhuj's urban development at the time. The picture that we obtain from this work is of a city surrounded by open land devoid of development well into the 1930s, consistent with residents' descriptions of how Bhuj would expand southward during that decade, when the first new housing colonies were being plotted and designed, beginning with Vijay-nagar Colony. The most common views of turn-of-the-century Bhuj included studies of the Hamirsar Lake and its environs; the Bhujiyo fort with studies of its foreground landscape; and the vistas one could obtain from atop the Bhujiyo Hill or the Prag Mahal's clock tower in the Darbargarh. These were common subjects because they were the easiest to obtain, given the technological limitations of photography at the time.

Hamirsar Lake and its environs

This very early panoramic view (see below) of Hamirsar Lake in Bhuj was photographed from the vantage point of a turn in the road along the city's lakefront, adjacent to the *gau* ghat, of which the first few steps are indeed barely visible at the photograph's bottom right. It is perhaps late in the year, when there is still water left in the lake's bed; and, as the length of shadows cast westward by people and buildings in the photograph suggests, the photographer probably positioned himself early one morning not far from where the Krishnaji Bridge would later be constructed to avoid being disturbed by traffic later in the day.

The photograph's unhurried gaze points to a number of familiar historical sights of which we can take critical stock in our inventory of the lake's sparsely developed edge. In the context of development both before and after the earthquake of 2001, this image provokes considerable thought about the nature of change along the waterfront in the intervening hundred and forty years since this photograph was taken.

The Lakhota was initially intended to be an island accessible only to the Royal Family; the long pathway which connects it to the lakefront was not constructed up until the early 1950s. Instead, the island remained a pleasure garden removed from the humdrum of life in the city, complete with bastions and a basic shape which recalls the ziggurats of ancient Mesopotamia, structures that were built on successive platforms and which looked very geometric in shape.

The island's precise date of construction is uncertain, but judging from the fact that in this photograph it reveals very few trees, the Lakhota may have been built in the early 19th century, most probably after the devastating earthquake of 1819. The island was

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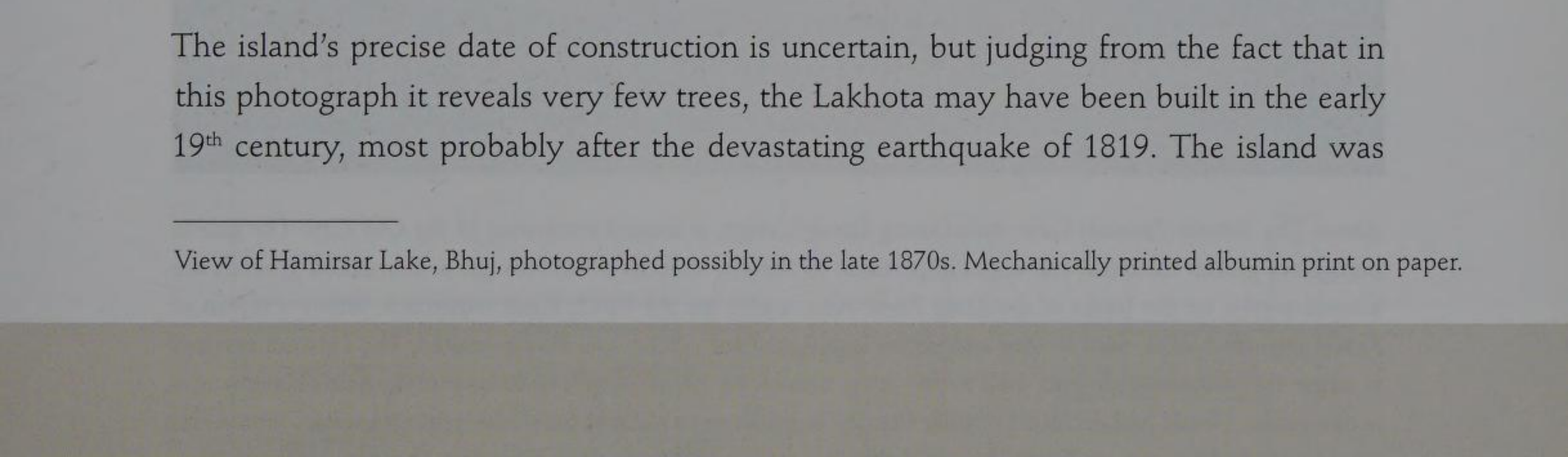
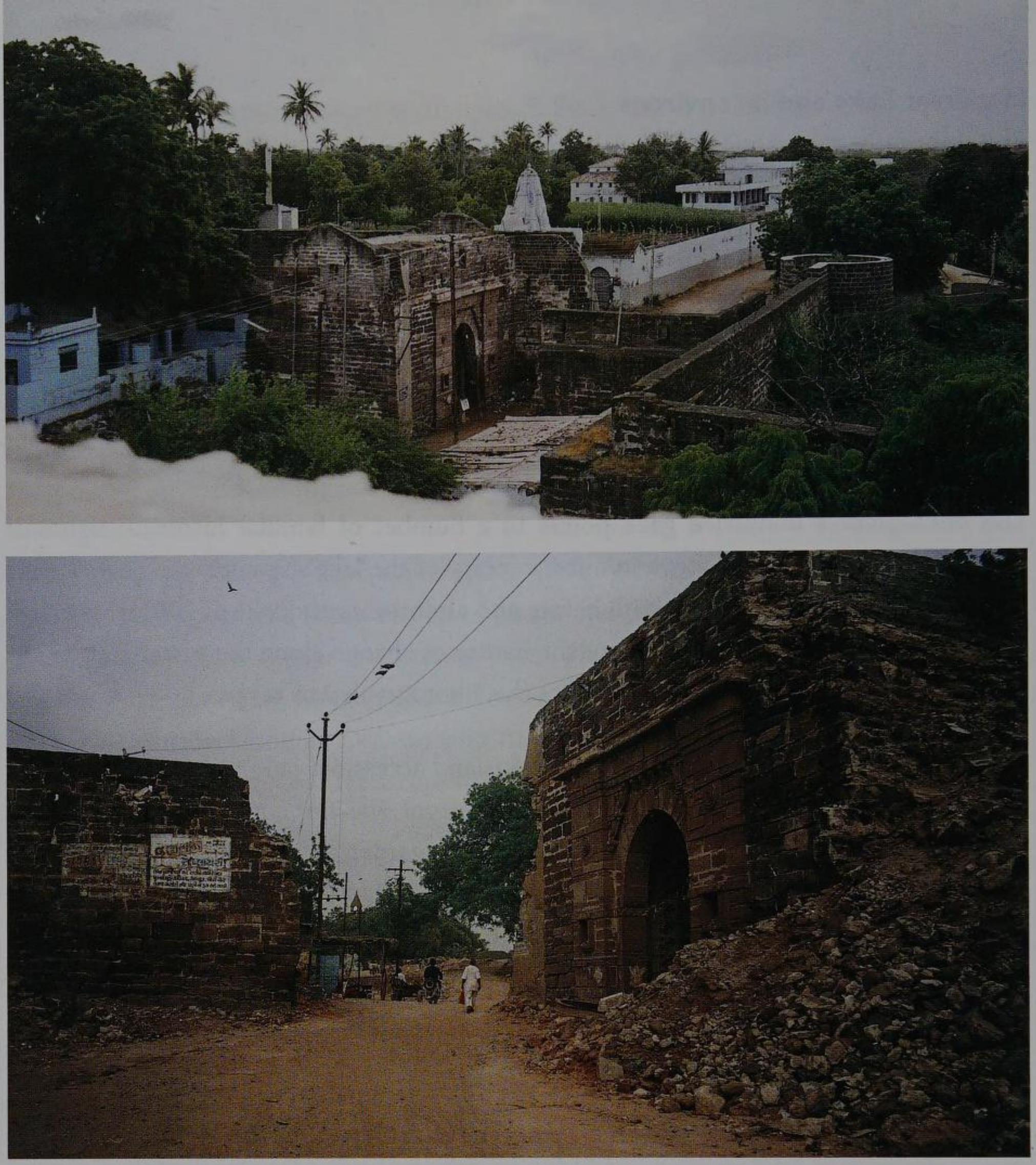
View of Hamirsar Lake, Bhuj, photographed possibly in the late 1870s. Mechanically printed albumin print on paper.





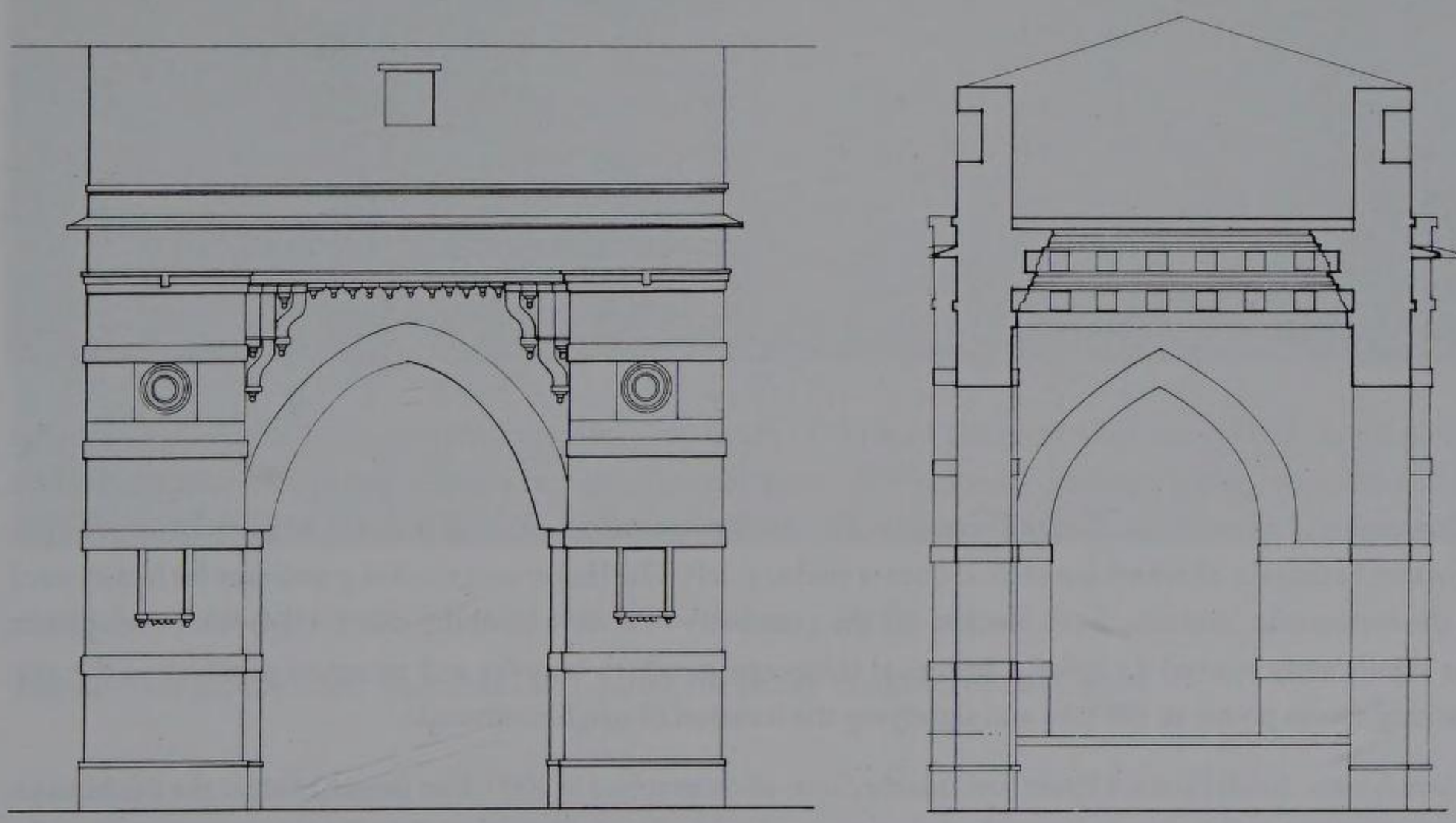
Above: The historic Patwadi Gate, built during Desalji's reign, is located northwest of the Old City. The gate is perhaps of greater historical and social importance to the city than its other four gates. Cremation grounds are located nearby, on the banks of the Khari River. Also nearby are the Panch Hatdi crossroads, where a diwan of Kutch, Jagjivan Mehta, used to stay and where local historians say he was also murdered. The Patwadi precinct is where the Maharao's servants used to live at the turn of the 19th century. The history of the gate's construction is interesting. Desalji had decided to fortify the city in response to a threat from Ahmedabad's sultan, Jubo Kesar Khan, who had his eye on Kutch. It is said that the *jagirdar* of Dhirnodhar, Chir Shri Somnathji, visited Bhuj, and after consulting the horoscopes, determined an auspicious time for the fort's construction. He decreed that a young man "of excellent character" be sacrificed to ensure the project's completion, and so the king advertised for a Lohana, Muslim or Brahmin, whose family would be richly rewarded in exchange for his sacrifice. Four days went by without a volunteer. The king, anxious to get the job done, prayed to the goddess Rudrani, who appeared subsequently to him in a dream and told him to look northward the next day, from where he should expect a man riding a buffalo. As prophesied in the dream, a youth named Sheikh Laghasa appeared to offer his head in sacrifice, after which work promptly began on the fort. A shrine was built to commemorate him, marked by a dargah nearby which still exists. The 17th-century Pateshwar Mahadev temple is located just beyond the gate. This view was photographed in 2000, five months before the earthquake, from the roof of the Fateh Mohammed-*no-Khordo*.

Below: Patwadi Gate, 2001.

expanded along its exterior in the 1930s when new earthen embankments were added to its fort-like walls, in effect hiding their outline so that today we have no inkling that its walls indeed exist. Only a hint of the ramp at right can still be discerned today.

What is more intriguing is the possibility that the Lakhota – or Rajendra Bagh, as it is known in its current avatar – might have a contemporary significance to 21st-century Bhuj. Were the city to rejuvenate its historic sites, the island could be viewed in future as an economic asset, generating revenue for Bhuj's Municipality. Rajendra Bagh remains an iconic image at the city's very heart, and as a focus for tourism merits proper preservation and maintenance. In the past several years, the Bagh's garden has fallen into disrepair, rampant with weeds and badly maintained garden furniture. The four bastions at the Lakhota's corners in this picture (see pages 118–119) are now feeble outcrops receeding into oblivion, standing mutely without a hint of just how stately they might once have looked at the Bagh's corners. They could, if local government and the city's history buffs were eager enough, illustrate a shrewd first investment in improving the city's image and its potential to attract the discerning tourist, much in the manner that Jamnagar's Lakhota, impressively lit at night, a sparkling gem at the centre of the city's lake, looks to a visitor to that historic city. The Bagh's privileged history must not be disavowed but celebrated. It must be recognized for the fact that as the Maharao's exclusive pleasure garden it represented an important cog in a wheel of urban development patronized by the Kutch Monarchy, forming an indelible part of the city's larger, historical narrative.

The potential to revive a sense of history in harmony with the city's new development is powerfully visible even in the historic buildings which surround the Bagh, since they record



Patwadi Gate, elevation and section. 2002.

Above: View of Hamirsar Lake from the roof of the Fateh Mohammed-*no-Khordo*, photographed prior to the 2001 earthquake, when Patwadi School, a one-storey structure built in concrete against the lake's edge, was still standing. The building collapsed completely in the earthquake, as did large parts of the 19th-century Naniba Sanskrut Pathshala, of which the second floor is visible at left. The Hamirsar's retaining wall was far higher prior to the earthquake, and may have blocked off the possibility of a view from the street. High-rise development has significantly marred an orderly, historical landscape in which temples and mosques punctuated the sky, marking access points to the lake and signifying the location of neighbourhoods.

Below: A view down Patwadi Street towards the Gate, photographed in 2000, four months before the earthquake. A sweet-water well is situated outside the compound to the Fateh Mohammed-*no-Khordo* at right, and to the left is the retaining wall to Patwadi School, now demolished.

Above: Bhoi-*varo-aaro* along Hamirsar Lake, Bhuj, 2003.

Below: Pavdi ghat in ruins, Hamirsar Lake, during the heavy monsoon of 2003, Bhuj.

Above: This is perhaps the earliest available view of the Sharad Bagh Palace's north facade, photographed in the late 1870s when the coconut palms on the property were still saplings. The palace was then the only building in the area, and could be seen from a considerable distance.

Below left and right: The Sharad Bagh Palace, after the 2001 earthquake.The palace has not been restored.

the sweep of the city's early development. Ironically, it is pictures such as these, photographed in the late 19th century, (which appear to actually strip away, laying bare recent development, the lake's historic character). It is quite rare to see such panoramas today, given today's penchant for cloaking beautiful monuments in unsightly development. To the right of the photograph (see pages 118–119) is the Patwadi precinct, largely hidden from view by the lake's retaining wall. The Patwadi area is considered one of the oldest areas to have been developed in Bhuj, and the Bhoi-*varo-aaro* is clearly visible at the far edge of the picture, after which we can only discern the rooftops of major buildings, including the Fateh Mohammed-*no-Khordo*, the Naniba Sanskrut Pathshala, the Old Court Building, and the roof of the Old Post Office, which has survived the earthquake but which remains in poor condition. To their left, and completing the Patwadi panorama, are the final bastion of the old city at its western edge, followed by the barely visible *shikhar* of the Pateshwar Mahadev temple.

As we move our gaze westward, we begin also to see the faint outlines of an *Id-gah* and the newly built Sharad Bagh Palace, which at the time was visible from a considerable distance across the lake. A careful inspection of the photograph reveals that the lake was home even in the late 19th century to squatters, who appear to be huddling around a cooking fire at the photograph's extreme left. Their space, in contemporary times when the lake has been dry, has given over to hosting circus tents and public events in summer. If 21st-century plans to reclaim the lake as a body of water become reality and the lake remains full throughout the year, the critical question ahead is whether such "reverse" transformation will inadvertently deny the city this kind of public, informal arena for congregation. It remains to be seen whether the Bhuj Area Development Authority will plan alternatively designed large public spaces in the tradition of the old Kharsra Grounds, with its 1930s picturesqueness and endless expanse in which to play.

But what has happened to Rajendra Bagh today, and by extension, to its alter ego, the grounds at Kharsra? How must citizens reclaim the idea of a truly public space in which to host fairs today, as the city goes about redesigning its image in the years to come?

Following page

Above: Cricket on Kharsra Maidan, early 1900s. The Darbargarh's clock tower and Bhujiyo Hill are visible in the distance.

Centre: The occasion of a fair or wedding in Kharsra Maidan, looking towards Mota Pir and the *dharmashala* nearby, or a view of Rumana wadi behind Kotdi Bagh, Bhuj, photographed in the 1880s. The scene includes a royal cavalry, and a tented congregation. This area is now the modern development of Sanjognagar, with the Khari River in the far distance.

Below: The plain of Kharsra, located north of Sarpat gate in Bhuj. This photograph was probably taken in the late 1930s. Prag Mahal's clock tower appears faintly to the photograph's far right. The closest entry to this part of Kharsra would be from Patwadi Gate.

The Hamirsar's waterfront in the late 19th century

In this *mise en scène*, the photographer positions himself not as he did at the lake's edge looking on to the Lakhota, but *on the Lakhota itself*, training his eye *backwards* to reconsider the city from where he has journeyed out into the belly of the lake. His lens captures a particularly arresting view, framed by the Bhujiyo Hill's silhouette and punctuated by the 18th-century skin of the Alampanah Fort from which the Mohammed Pannah's Mosque emerges discreetly to reveal a profusion of domes.

The photograph reveals other noteworthy details. Corner plots of land opposite the fort's final bastion and along the lake's edge remain undeveloped; any form of railing against the water's edge is absent. A road leading from Chhatti Bari turns the corner where the Alfred High School should be – but isn't, as we note to our surprise. Indeed, the lake's edge appears quite differently from how it might have looked *had the Alfred High been demolished after the 2001 earthquake*, for in this picture its *absence* leaves a void through which we can barely discern the outline of the Kalyaneshwar Temple behind. Evidently, the rich foliage which punctuates Nazar Bagh today, and the trees along the remaining edge under whose *otla*s people today sit without giving their branches a second thought, were only saplings in the 1870s.

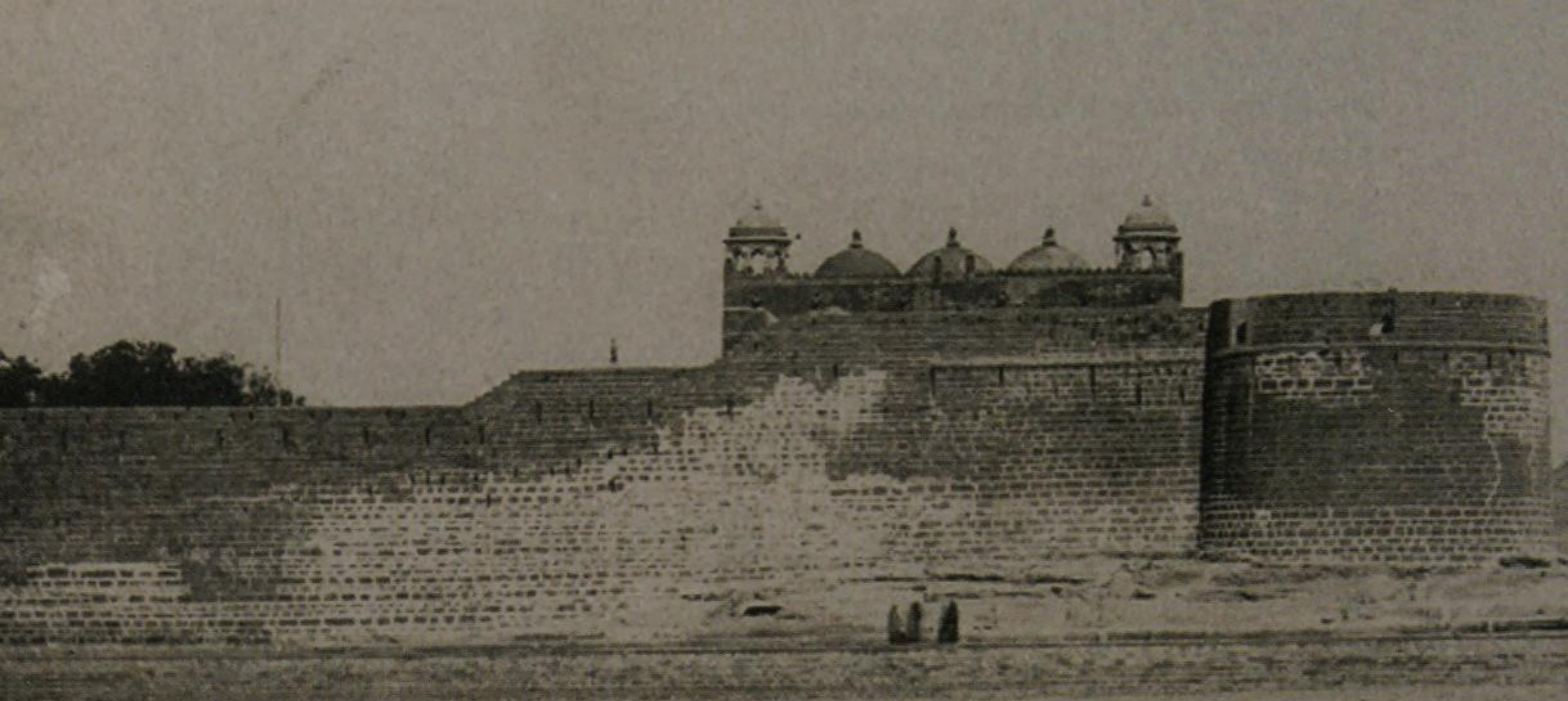
Let us consider the possibility that the city was "greened", and a project conceived to redevelop the waterfront in the progressively modern image we know today, by Pragmalji II and his progeny, who may have acquiesced to British colonial building and planning principles that had been systematically refined by English architects and engineers. These professionals were influenced by the European City Beautiful movement at the turn of the 19th century, and the concerns of *grand manière* schemes which characterized the foundations of European urban renewal after the reshaping of Rome's great streets in the 1500s; the Great Fire of London in 1666, which destroyed much of the city; and the rebuilding of Paris in the mid-18th century.

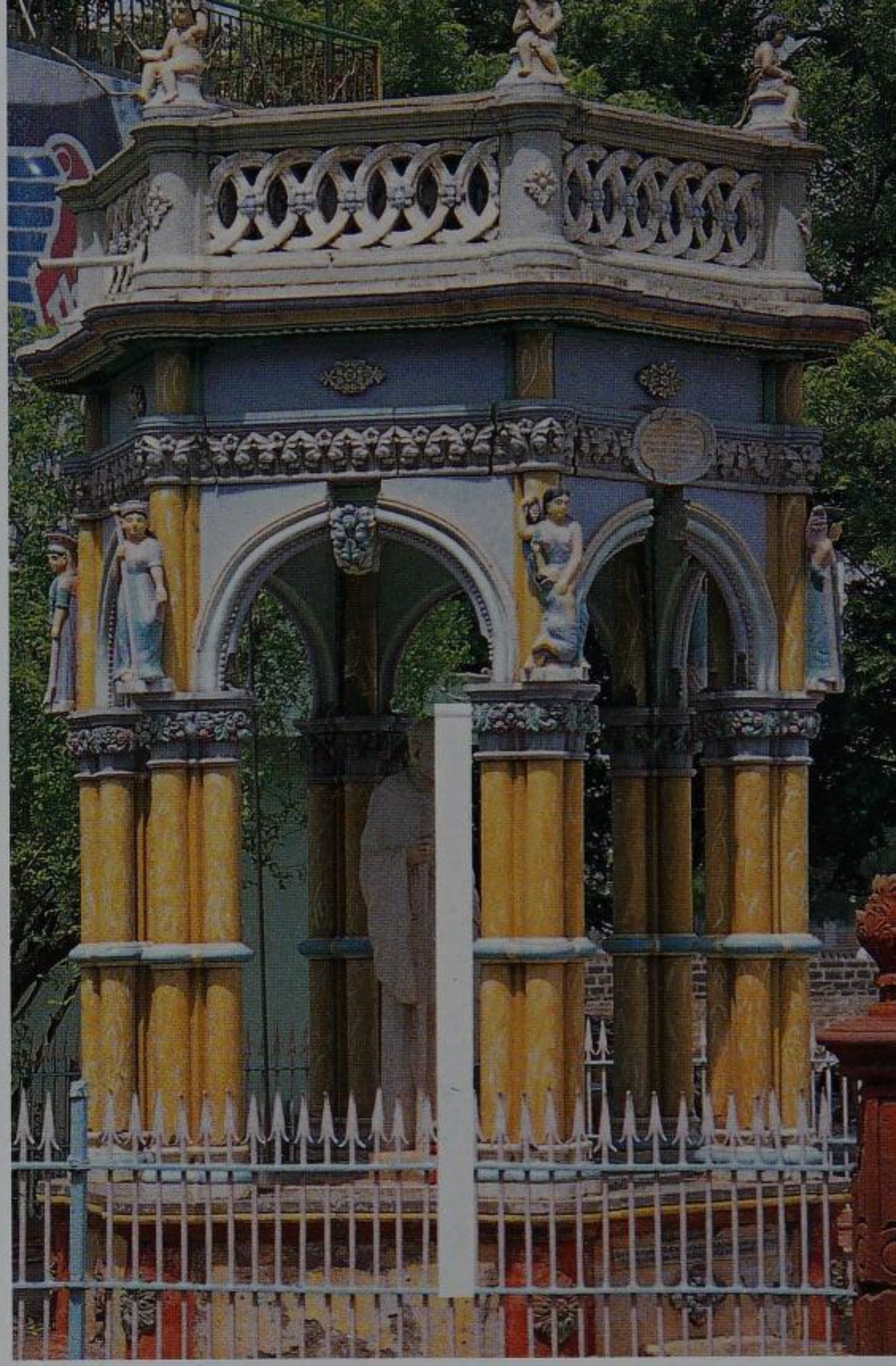
Following pages:

Above: A photograph inscribed "View [from] Pabadi Bagh", photographed across Hamirsar Lake in the early 1870s, looking towards the plot of land on which the Alfred High School would later be built in 1885. The bastion at the corner reveals the Mohammed Pannah mosque's several domes. At far left would be Mahadev Gate, outside the picture's frame. Note the faint outline of a commemorative pillar that has now disappeared from the property of the Alfred High School.

Below left: View of the corner of the bastion, Bhuj fort, looking towards Mahadev Gate. The same commemorative pillar can now be seen in greater detail. Bollards are visible close to the bastion, and probably prevented heavy vehicular traffic from turning onto Hamirsar Lake from the road leading to the lake from Vaniawad.

Below right: A view of a commemorative pillar at the corner of what is today the Alfred High School's property. The distinctive retaining wall to Rajendra Bagh (or Lakhota) is clearly visible in the distance in Hamirsar Lake.





Above left top: View of the corner where Khengarji III's *chabutara* once stood off Hamirsar Lake, photographed in the 1980s from the top of a corner bastion of Bhuj's fort wall.

Above left below: A statue to Gandhi, at a spot along Hamirsar Lake, close to where the statue to Khengarji III once stood. Khengarji's canopied *chabutara* was removed when relaying roads along the Hamirsar, and replaced with a new canopy which unfortunately lacks the charm and sense of history that the old *chabutara* projected.

Above right: A pavilion at the corner of Alfred High School houses a statue of Mahatma Gandhi. The pavilion was originally built in 1895 to commemorate Maharao Khengarji III's reign, and accommodated a statue of him. The king's statue was later removed after Kutch's union with India in 1948, and re-erected in the courtyard of Jethi-wandi in the Old City. A plaque above the pavilion's main arch declared that it had been erected by Minister Chhotalal Sevakram, tutor to the Maharao, to honour his ward, "Mirza Maharajadhiraja Khengar". The Minister's house once stood where Kapta Studio is now located on Uplipal Road.

Lest we think these to be experiments in theory, let us not forget that these European experiments in city-rebuilding were bold, *practical* schemes to reorganize a city; and there is indeed much in their stories to compare with the challenge of rebuilding Bhuj. The people who redesigned Rome, London and Paris – Pope Sixtus V, Sir Christopher Wren and Baron Haussmann – were unafraid to break with tradition in introducing new ideas that would completely reshape their cities' image. They chose to erase old areas of the city to make way for the new, prompting an entire generation to begin to see the city in its new form, not as it had looked to earlier generations.

Above left: A plaque above one of the pavilion's arches declares that it is Minister Chhotalal who commissioned the pavilion's construction in 1875 to honour "Mirza Maharajadhiraja Khengar".

Above right: Statue of Khengarji III, Jethi-wandi, 2001. The statue was retrieved and moved to Jethi-wandi from its canopied position along the Hamirsar Lake, where a statue to Gandhi now stands in its place.

There is, in addition, a hint of *erasure* in this photograph, one example of how the vicissitudes of history shape generational images of places that are never static but always evolving in response to changing priorities. At the corner of the road which turns at the Mahadev Gate bastion onto the avenue leading down to the bus station, there was once a commemorative column close to where a statue to Mahatma Gandhi now stands (see page 130). In due course, as the Alfred High School and the road to the lake were redesigned, the column outside the new school was erased. In 1885, a *chabutara* was built to honour Maharao Khengarji III nearby. In the recent months since the implementation of a town plan for Bhuj began in 2003, this *chabutara* has been demolished and the space it occupied redesigned as a public plaza, highlighting the spot where an old well was recently uncovered and restored. These small acts of erasure and uncovering – these small moments in reorganizing priorities – mark important transitions from the periphery's old picture to the new one that we are familiar with today, and it suggests that such additions and erasures do not follow moral or historical absolutes but are susceptible to the whims of generational decision-making.

Fifty years later

There are two ways of looking at the development which differentiates this view (see below) from the photograph on pages 128–129. Considered in purely aesthetic terms, the photograph's buildings and trees appear to have almost magically cropped up in the intervening fifty years along the lake's edge. A more modern architectural topography is marked now with structures along the lake's edge, including the Alfred High School, the Kutch Museum, Nazar Bagh, and the Satyanarayan, Kalyaneshwar and Kandriya Mahadev complexes of temples at far right. Taken as a whole, these buildings record almost every single historical period in the city's four-hundred-year chronology.

The lakefront remains richly endowed in the sort of social and architectural meaning only briefly outlined in "Politics, Patronage and the City". The Alfred High School's neo-

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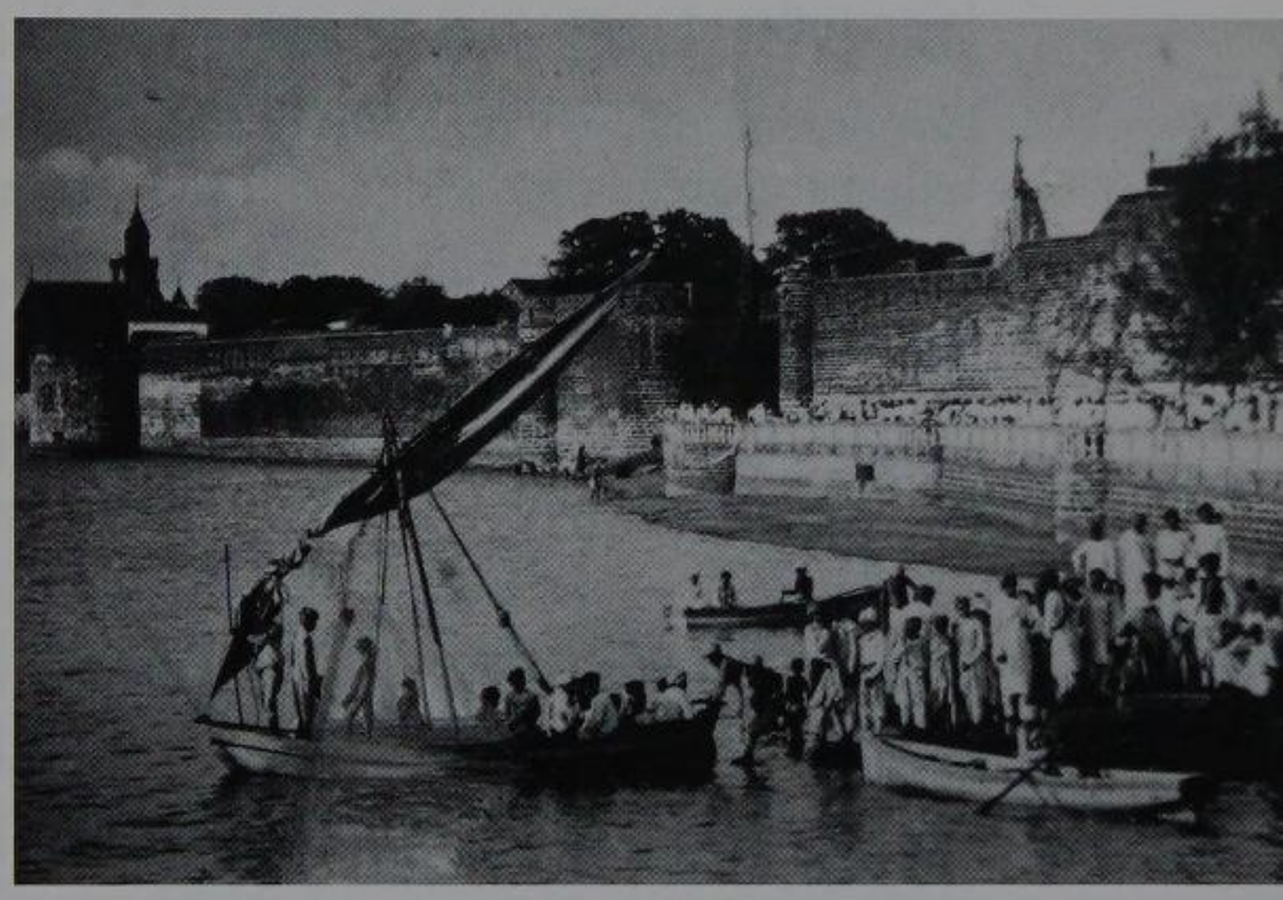
View of Hamirsar Lake from the Lakhota, Bhuj, probably 1920s. Mechanically printed albumin print on paper, late 1920s.

classical facade is now a visual counterpoint to the far older edge of the Alampanah Fort at left, and the Kutch Museum remains partially hidden from view behind a clump of trees. People use the *gau* ghat as a passage into the lake and on which to wash clothes, a practice that has continued since. The lake's neatly defined retaining walls are punctuated by small bastions, several of which collapsed in the 2001 earthquake, and the lake's periphery is now accented in this picture with an elegant balustrade. The lake's trees soften its busy architectural contours, interstitially colouring in those spaces which seemed unsatisfyingly blank in the lakefront of the 1870s.

A critical reading of this picture, moreover, points to issues that are relevant to the general debate on urban development today in Bhuj. Of key consideration here should be the real estate value of historic properties around the lake, and the importance of bringing several people with different vested interests together in restoring and enhancing these economic assets.

To great extent, the lakefront promises both commercial value and a metaphorical pricelessness. Imagine, for a moment, the unlikely scenario that the Alfred High School and the Kutch Museum have been demolished years from now as their governing bodies decide to build earthquake-resistent buildings anew in their place, and the Museum's artefacts moved to an annexe in the newly constructed Town Hall. Imagine, then, a



Right: Janmashtmi celebrations in Hamirsar Lake, photographed in the 1880s. The approach to the boat is from the *gau* ghat jetty not far from the Alfred High School. The silhouettes of the Darbargarh and Hatkeshwar Temple are visible just behind the fort wall. "Janmashtmi is the last fair in the year for Bhuj. It also fell on Maharao Vijayarajji's birthday. To celebrate the day, the court would meet in the morning, and evenings were meant for processions. The royal train would make its way down to the Kalyaneshwar Mahadev temple, arriving finally at the bandstand. The Maharao would be given a 19-cannon salute and then the procession would return to the Darbargarh, felicitated by people shouting *'Jiye Ra, Jiye Ra'* along its way." From an interview with Sarojbhai Shukl, Bhuj.

Below right: The Janmashtmi festival in the 1970s was celebrated much as it had been for a century at the Hamirsar's waterfront, with people gathering at the *gau* ghat to take to the water.

scheme to design high-rise commercial developments in their place, not unlike the kind of apartment buildings which completely eclipsed Bhuj's old neighbourhoods over the past forty years. Undoubtedly, given the scenario, property values along the lake's edge would escalate as builders claimed their pounds of flesh. One might objectively argue that a city's rebirth is as much about changing financial priorities as it is about remembering the past, and that this should adequately compensate for their demolition. Undoubtedly, people would perhaps have greater recourse to a supermarket, a new community centre or a cinema theatre to compete with Sur Mandir and Modern Talkies, modern conveniences in place of dusty museum cabinets and hopelessly displaced stones.

But before this utopian vision completely overtakes us, consider for a moment who might *ultimately* gain from such hypothetical erasure and redevelopment; in the final analysis, only a select few. For one, builders and financiers will come and go, without having invested much more than their building material and monies in redevelopment, and without an iota of care for the cultural associations which have defined this historic edge for generations. Moreover, only a niche clientele would patronize these new commercial or residential complexes, people wealthy enough to afford rents and prices that will have been inflated to recover the cost of developing them. The Hamirsar would die an ugly death, as its beautifully crafted outline succumbs to a new angularity that could only reflect the greedy individualism, rootlessness and environmental apathy which defines popular consumerist culture today.

In 2002, the Kachchh Nav Nirman Abhiyan began a concerted effort to interest citizens in the project of redeveloping the lake's historic edge as a first strategy to culturally and economically reviving Bhuj. Their work extended efforts begun by the Government of Gujarat's Department of Irrigation in the same year. Through drives to publicly raise funds and the work they did to restore the lake's walls before the monsoons, citizens demonstrated how powerful partnerships in development can be a means to building consensus between those who hold a very real, economic stake in the city's resources. Working closely with the Akshar Purshottam Swaminarayan Trust, property owners, and key citizens, agencies began a quiet initiative to reclaim the Hamirsar's iconic image. Clearly, this sort of initiative to "repackage", as it were, the lakefront as an economic strategy will focus new attention on the city's historic spaces. Perhaps this is the only positive way to assuage both the "softer" concerns of historians and hard-nosed commercial instinct of venture capitalism which characterizes development in Bhuj after the 2001 earthquake.

Could the Abhiyan's model for a citizens' partnership in development be emulated – and indeed refined – by other parties across the city equally concerned about the economic potential in cultural heritage?

Of temples and a bandstand

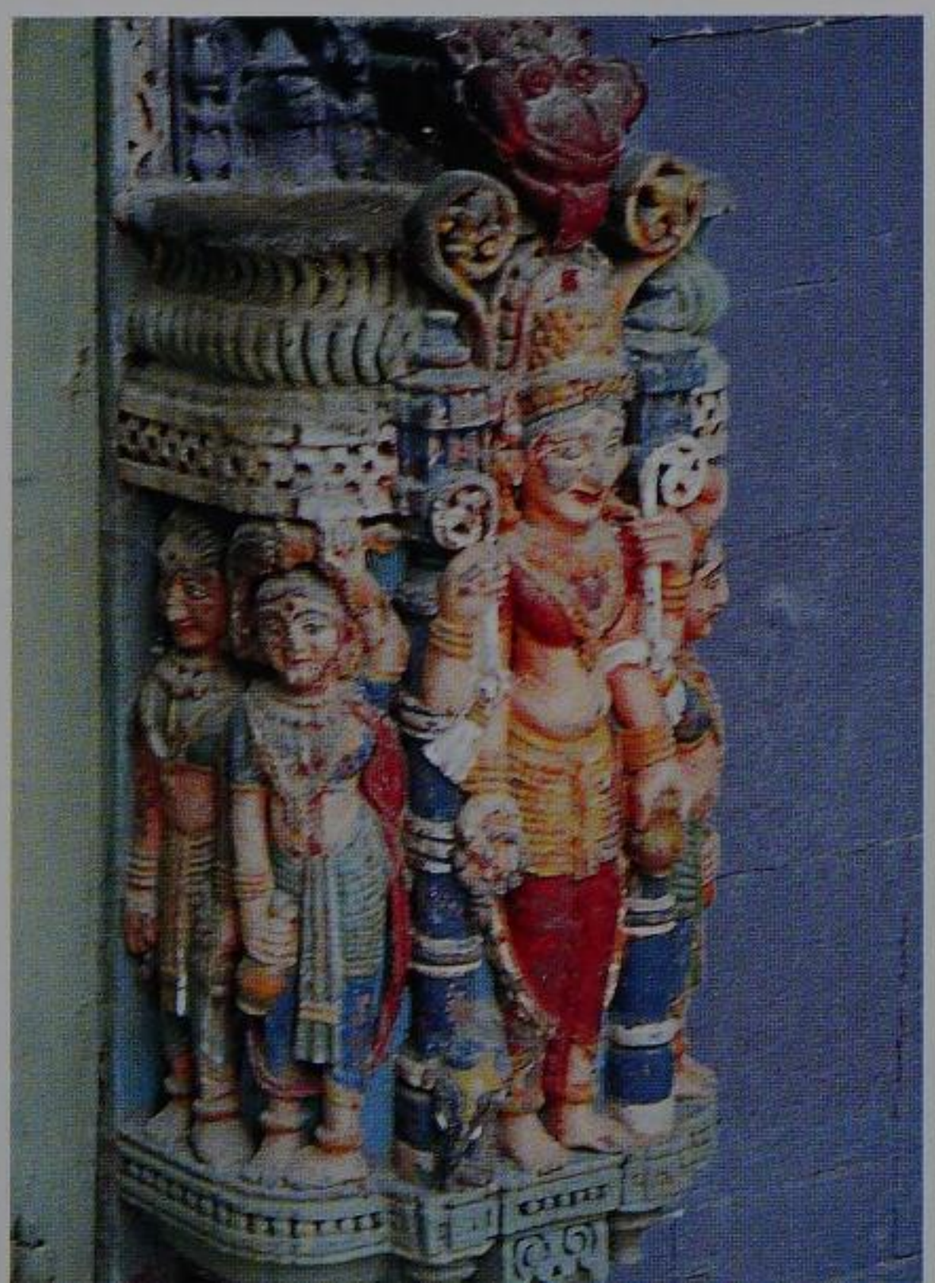
The business of *adding* and *erasing* in the reconstruction process must have been illustrated in innumerable, subtle instances elsewhere in the city. This picture completes the panorama on page 132, emphasizing in greater detail the richly dense cluster of temples which includes the Kalyaneshwar Mahadev and Satyanarayan temple complexes, and their subsidiary shrines. The photographer recording this view actually stood in the lake bed, to the left of Krishnaji Bridge, and not far from the Hamirsar's *gau* ghat. From this position, he took pains to capture the entire sweep of historical temples along this stretch, recording as he did the details of houses located in the recesses between the temples' *shikhar*s.

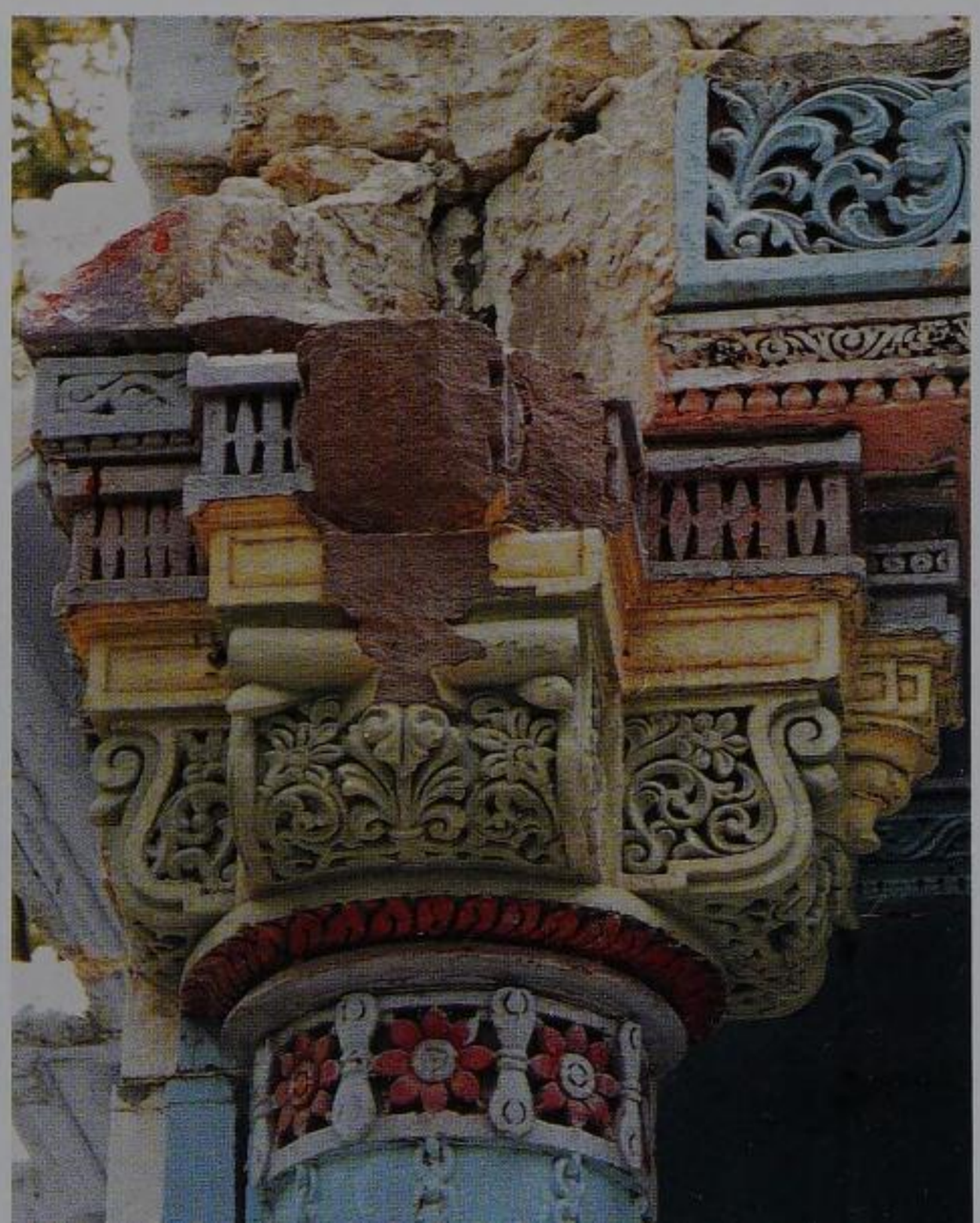
But what is perhaps most interesting about this photograph – and which requires that we inspect it very closely – is the little bandstand with its baroque sweep of steps, defined by a grand curl as it opened out to the road. Bhuj's memorable bandstand with its roughly square, raised platform emerges from under the trees close to a projecting bastion, thrusting its outline from amongst the profusion of lines on the page.

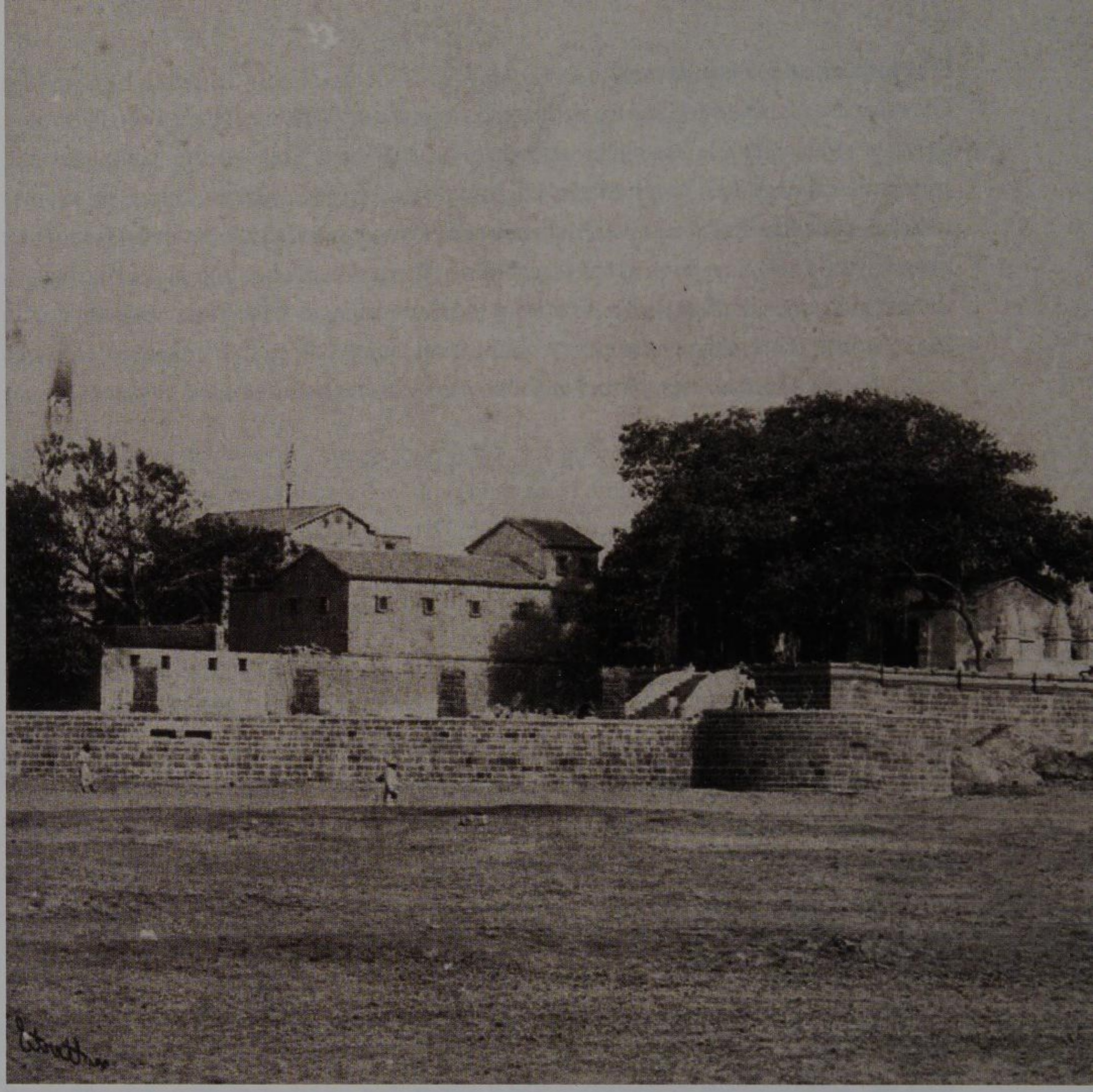
In another view of the same bandstand (see page 132), the structure is visible from an entirely different perspective, looking towards the distinctive, arched gate of the Satyanarayan Temple. This second picture affords some sense of the pomp and circumstance surrounding the bandstand as a place for people to converge on in the 19th and early 20th centuries; it was here, in fact, that a band from Goa performed every Saturday to great public acclaim,[73] and it is also where the Maharao and his British counterparts sometimes held ceremonial audiences in public. The bandstand has since been completely erased to make way for the Ram Dhun, and this erasure and redevelopment reflect a new generation's emerging priorities.

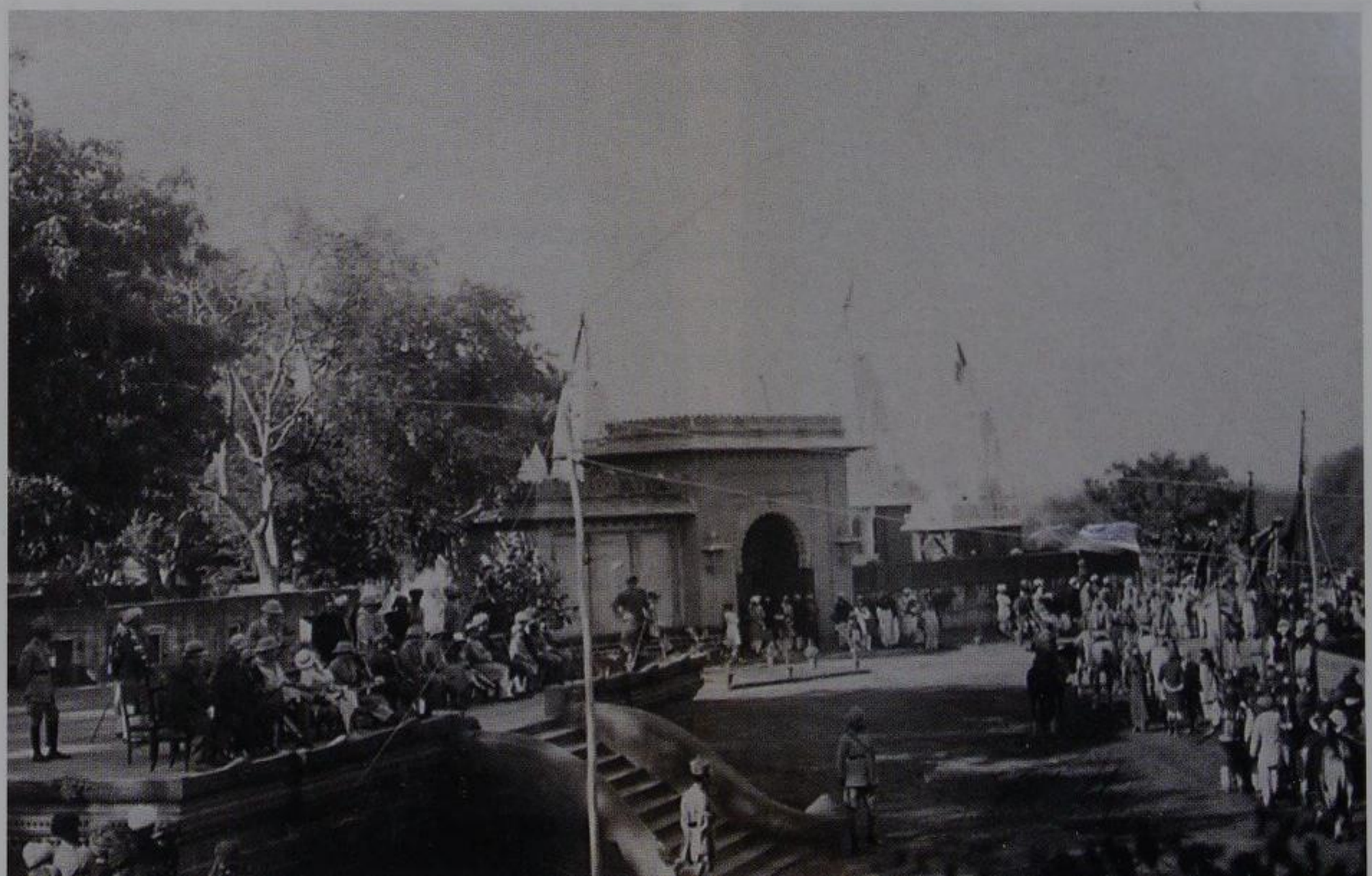
Below left: Detail of column, Satyanarayan Temple, Bhuj.

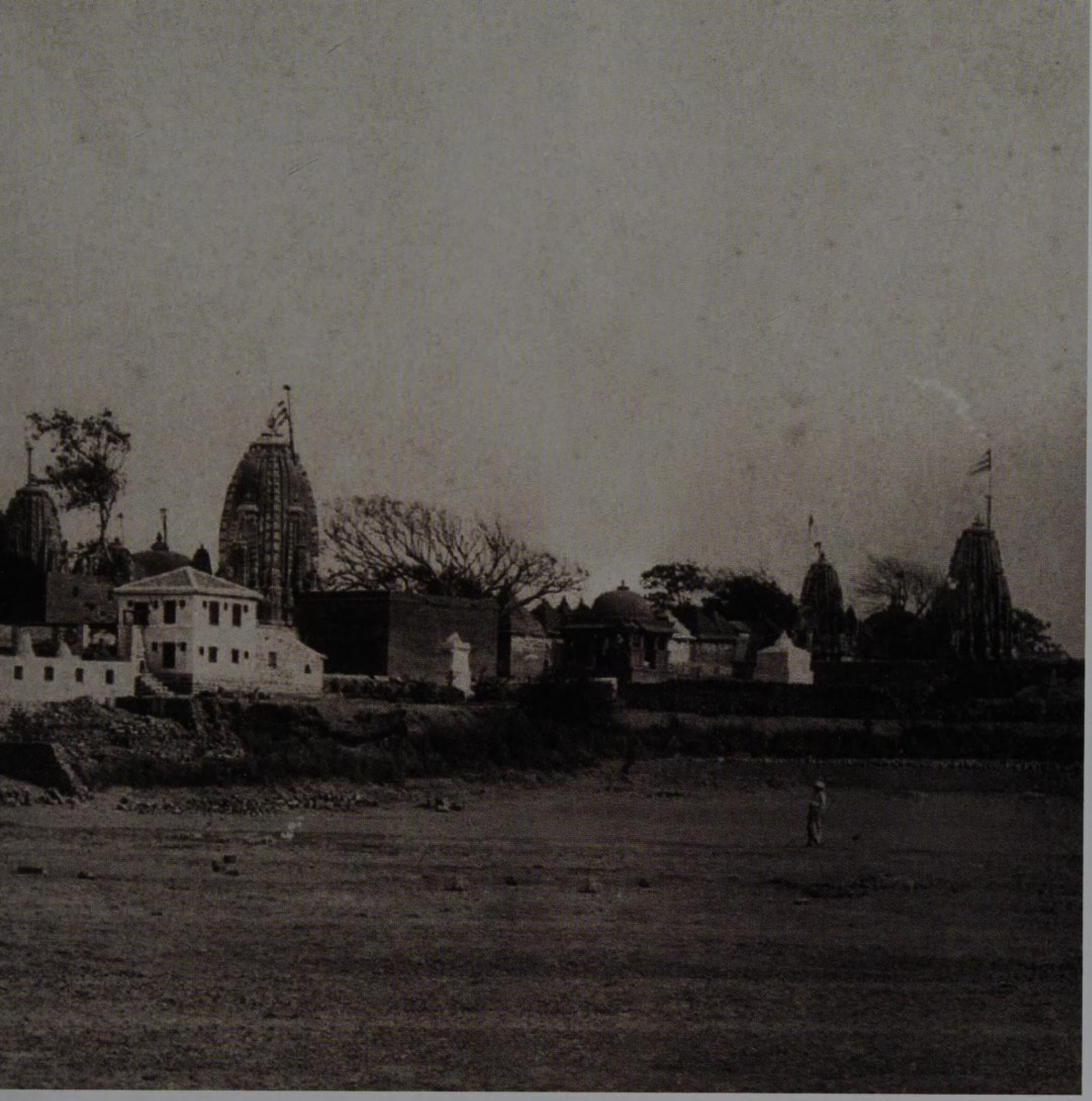
Below right: Detail of column capital, Satyanarayan Temple, Bhuj.











Above: View of the bandstand close to the gate to the Satyanarayan Temple, photographed from the Hamirsar's lakebed.

Facing page, below: A ceremony with English guests in the 1920s on the bandstand of Bhuj, with the gate to the Satyanarayan Temple, constructed in the late 19th century, visible just beyond. "Years ago, the Naga *bawas'* community used to come here in the month of Shravan. They used to bring their elephants with them and stayed under the peepul tree near the Satyanarayan temple. They used to light bonfires there, bathe in the Hamirsar Lake and then perform rituals around their fires. The *mahant* in the community used to recite tales at the open square and the people from neighbouring villages used to visit them. During the *saatam-aatham* fair, the king's public receptions here attracted crowds. People in Bhuj fondly remember Manuel Francis Rozario from Goa, who served up beautiful music with his band every Saturday for many years. Rao Khengarji III had commissioned Rozario to begin with, and his son Diego joined the band in 1933. Initially, people used to gather under a neem tree near the Ramdevpir Temple near Vaniawad corner to listen to him. The bandstand platform was constructed in the early 1900s. Both father and son earned great fame as musicians. When Kutch joined the Indian Union in 1948, this tradition came to an end and the people no longer enjoyed the free entertainment provided by the Maharao." From interviews with Umiyashankar Ajani and Praveen Shah. A shrine to the freedom fighter Vinod Kinnarivala, who died in the fight for Gujarat's independence, was built at this spot, but this, too, was demolished to make way for the Ram Dhun in 1984.

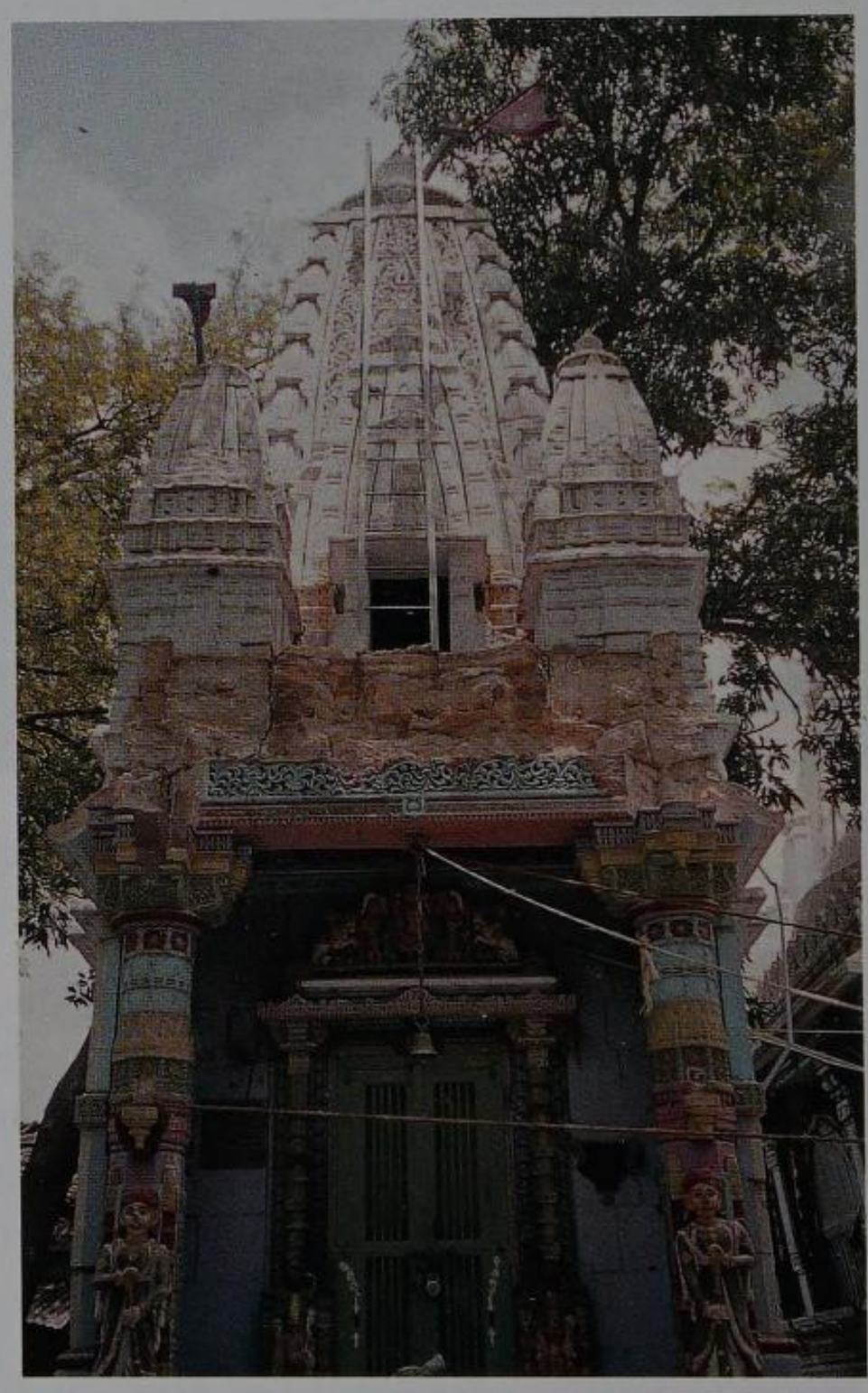
Above left: A palia headstone, 1857, Bhuj. Such headstones graced memorials in temples throughout Kutch.

Above right: Detail of column, Kalyaneshwar Mahadev Temple, Bhuj.

Right: The Satyanarayan Temple complex was built in the late 1880s, and includes three small temples. Inscriptions on the Lakheshwar Mahadev temple declare that "The wife of the great king, the owner of our lands, Shri Khengarji [III] and Jhala Jhalamsingh's daughter, Gangaba Saheb, built this temple in memory of the late king Kumarshri Lakhpatji and the rituals were performed by Shri Lakheshwar. This was done on the 14th day of the brighter half of Vaishakh in the year 1886." In the writer Harjivan Tribhuvan Tripathi's reckoning, Gangaba had lost a son, Lakhuba, at a very young age, and in her sorrow commemorated a temple to Lakheshwar Mahadev. The poetess Umarbai later commemorated the temple's inauguration in verse:

Khengarao sent invitations, welcomed Satyanarayan;
Coming from the north, established in the land of Bhuj;
The entire nation witnessed how the temple was constructed,
The hall was made beautifully, splendid and glorious,
He invited all the great men and fed them with sweets,
Great alms were given and so were precious clothes,
To the womb of Gangaba was gifted the prince Lakhpatrai;
Maha Jogeshwar became the priest – an avatar of Shri Shankar.
In the year of 56, in the month of Fagan,
They were established, on the seventh Wednesday.

An idol to Satyanarayan was consecrated here in 1906.



Facing page:
Detail of a shrine to *gaidhar* Suthaar Devashi Karanji, the construction supervisor of the Aina Mahal in the 17th century, in the Kalyaneshwar Temple complex. In Bhuj, the *gaidhar* was a sort of foreman who supervised the work of architects and contractors, from the *salaat* community of builders, inspected their drawings, and passed these on to a supervising *salaat* contractor who oversaw builders and labourers from the Manjothiya community.

Bhujiyo Hill and the old British Camp

This view (see below) of Bhujiyo Hill was perhaps photographed from across the road which today winds its way into Bhuj from Anjar, or from an area immediately southeast of the present-day Ramkrishna Colony and adjacent to the Indian military base, as evidenced by a dirt road at the bottom of the photograph. The old city would have been situated to the left of this scene, and at a considerable distance outside the picture's frame.

The photograph highlights the state of development outside the old city at the turn of the 19th century, when neighbourhoods had not as yet spread their tentacles to the Bhujiyo's

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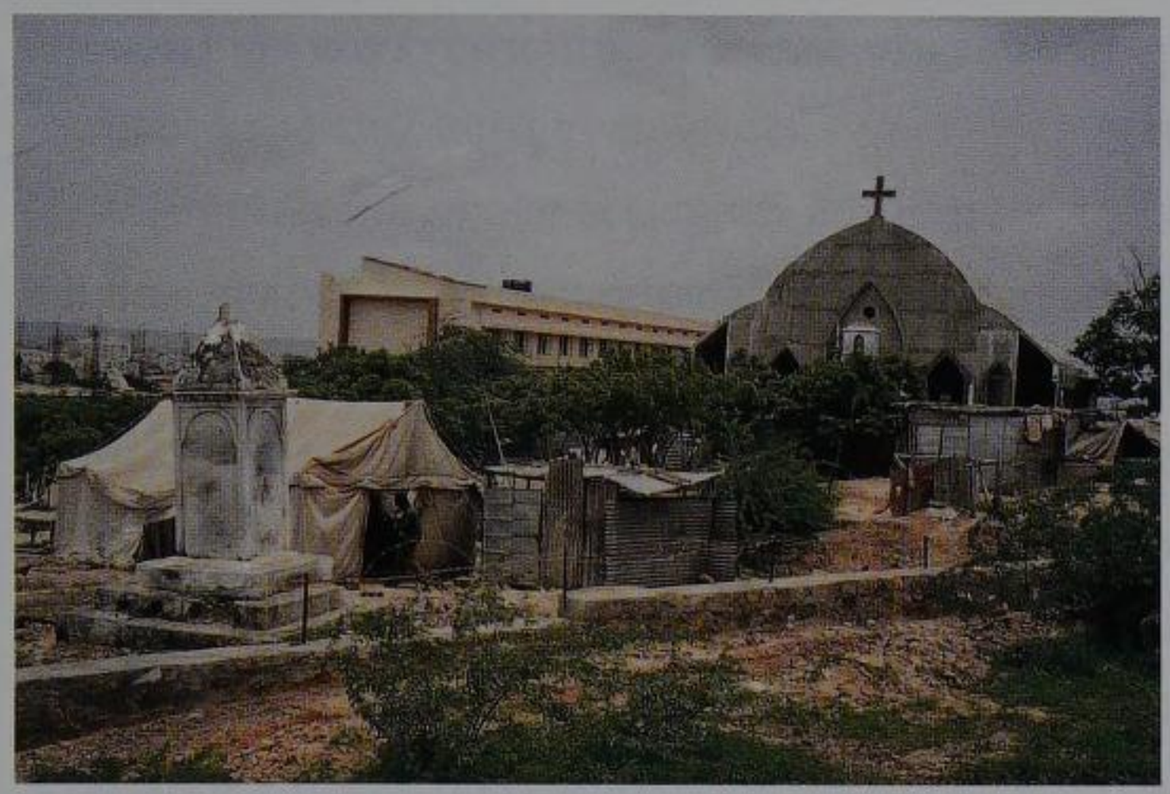
Below: View toward Bhujiyo Hill, photographed probably in the late 1920s. Compare this view with page 142. A bungalow belonging to Dr. Meherbanu Naoroji and her brother Sarosh (great-grandchildren of Dr. Dadabhai Naoroji's) is still located behind the Roman Catholic Church, as are the Commanding Officers' bungalows in the picture. Dr. Naoroji's daughter-in-law was a governess to the Royal Family. Meherbanu and Sarosh enjoyed the unique privilege of being the Maharao's favourites, visited by him at home and given privileged access to the Court. Mechanically printed albumin print on paper, early 1900s.



Above left: A long-forgotten, commemorative pillar or the headstone to a tomb outside the Protestant Church, barely visible on page 140 along the incline to Bhujiyo Fort.

Above right: A house belonging to the Parsi statesman Sir Dadabhai Naoraoji's great-grandchildren. The house has sadly been all but pulled down in the months following the earthquake.

foothill, but where the British Camp had clearly taken root during two centuries of political dialogue with the Kutch State.

Very few buildings visible in this picture have survived the course of development and the earthquake of 2001. Among them are the Old Catholic Church, which stands out at the base of the hill (left of centre), and which was demolished in early 2003 to make way for a more contemporary building. To the church's right is a tomb with a large gravestone belonging to an unknown Englishman, perhaps one of several who died in the Camp as members of a resident garrison. The building to the photograph's far right – perched almost against the horizon point – is a bungalow reputed to have been occupied for several months sometime in the 1920s or '30s by the Parsi statesman Dadabhai Naoroji's great-grandchildren.

The photograph points also to the potential to retain green cover in a fast-expanding city especially in the semi-aridity of Kachchh, where, today, trees are being continually uprooted to make way for new high-rise development.

Cantonment bungalows and fort, Bhuj, from a watercolour by the artist Harriet Parr, 1852. "Harriet married Thomas Chase Parr, a Bombay Army officer, at Bromley, Kent in May 1846. They arrived in India in November 1849. Parr was stationed at Bhuj on his return from furlough. The fort was built on a hill to the east of the city and dates from 1718 to 1741. In March 1819 it was captured by a British detachment under Sir William Keir and was subsequently held by the British. The Cantonment and European residences lay at the foot of the hill."

Looking down from Bhujiyo Hill

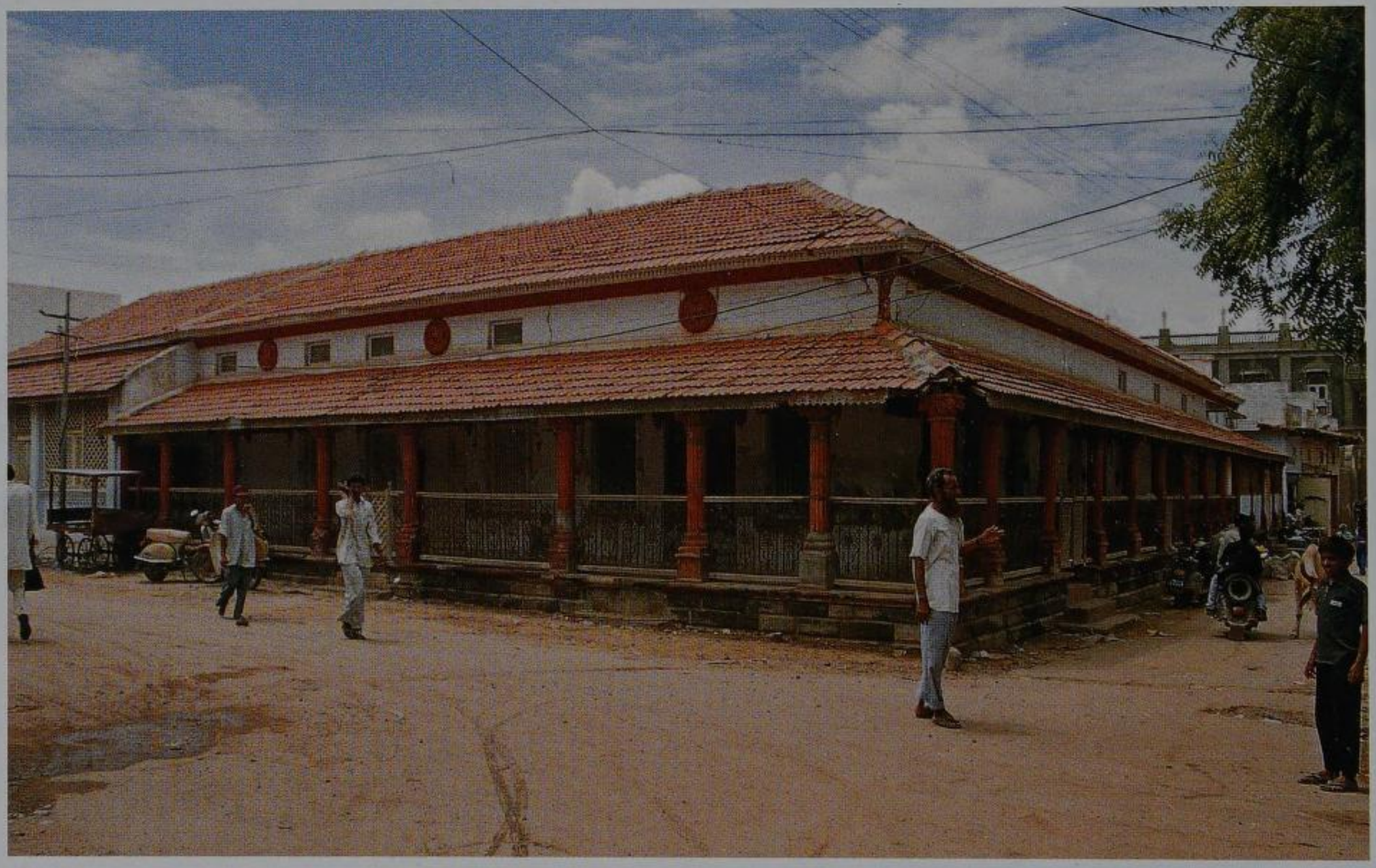
To record the city with even wider sweep than what we see in the previous picture, the photographer may have set up his equipment at the base of Bhujiyo Hill by first making his way through the premises of the Old English Church to its backyard. From here, he was able to command a view of the city which throws light, again, on the nature of city development at the time (see pages 144–145, above). The contrast between new and old settlements is clear: everything from the left of the picture to its centre documents the architectural sweep of a small British colonial occupation force which had, by the early 19th century, struck camp close to the Bhujiyo Hill. It was a small settlement, with very few distinguishing landmarks, of which the Old English Church was perhaps the only exemplar. John Smith, Bhuj's pioneering school teacher, would have lived in the quarters immediately east of the church, and a Parsi community would come to settle in the Parsi *vas*, building a 19th-century *agyaari* along the Camp's main street.

Everything, however, towards the photograph's top right half (see pages 144–145, above) constitutes a bird's-eye view of the old city, of whose density and scale there is but faint suggestion, in stark contrast to the modest, haphazard cluster of buildings which constitute the British Camp. There, outside the photographer's reach, the city's walls seem to envelop dense warrens of development which contrast with the near-emptiness of the surrounding landscape. The Darbargarh's clock tower is visible in the far distance, punctuating the old city's horizon line. Current-day development (see pages 144–145, below) has all but obscured the tower's silhouette, whereas up until the 1960s it would have remained the city's sole directional marker.

The 19th-century photographer may inadvertently have captured the profiles of both Bhid and Sarpat gates in this panorama. Further away along the edge of the city, towards the photograph's top right edge, would have been Vaniawad Gate, which, as the historical overview in "Politics, Patronage and the City" bore attention to, was an entrepôt to a rich trading community whose citizens would be the first to invest in the development of land south and southwest of the old city in the late 1930s. At the far top centre of the photograph, we see land that would later, in the 1960s, accommodate the first modern housing colonies in Bhuj to break away from the form and functions of the traditional *falia* neighbourhood: Vijaynagar, and Orient. These colonies prefaced the considerable, further development characteristic of the 1970s, '80s, and early '90s, neutralizing the contrast between the dense city and its near-barren surroundings evident in this picture.

Above: View from Bhujiyo Hill towards the Camp, photographed in the late 19th century.

Below: The 20th-century view from St. Xavier's School looking towards the Camp illustrates development that has completely altered the city's outlying landscape. Development pressures have almost completely obliterated the walled city's outline at far right, although the Darbargarh's Clock Tower is still faintly discernable.



Above: A Parsi family in Bhuj, late 19th century. There were several Parsi families in the city, including the Bhagalias, the Dangores (now in the town of Anjar), the Bhujwalas and the Boatwallas.

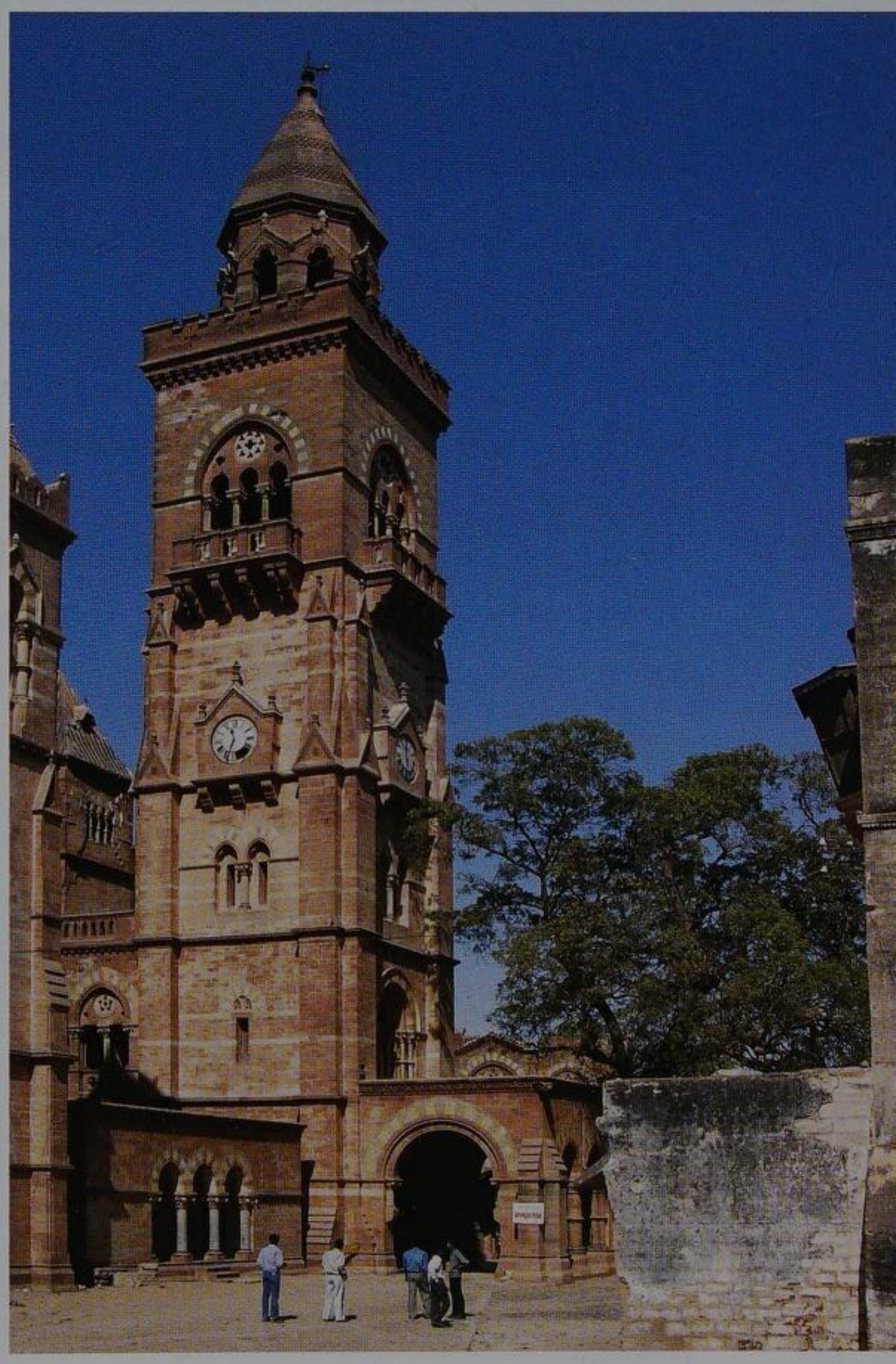
Below: The Bhujwala family house, Camp, Bhuj. Parsi *vad* is all but extinct, many of its old houses having been torn down to make way for newer construction over the decades.

An aerial view of the old city from the Clock Tower

To record this view (pages 148–149), the photographer mounted the steps to the Darbargarh's Clock Tower, transporting his equipment to the city's very highest point. The broad sweep of his canvas covers, again, the nature of development in the city not unlike the manner in which he captured the comparative serenity of development outside the Old City (compare this photograph with pages 144–145), but this time the contrast he is attempting is between the broad, empty expanse of the Hamirsar's waters and the comparative density of development surrounding it.

The Lakhota appears suspended at the photograph's centre, and it is significant that there is no sign of a causeway connecting the island to the lake's edge. (This would be constructed later in the 1950s.) The Panch Hatdi area is located close to the Darbargarh, around which were poorer neighbourhoods, settled by royal servants and tradesmen, and by the royal gardeners appointed to the king's nurseries. Toward the far left, however, is an entirely different sociological reality: richer neighbourhoods, characterized by the intellectual Nagar Brahmin elite and the Vania trading community.

Beyond the Darbargarh is the historic *chhattedi* complex, a group of ornamental cenotaphs built for members of the Royal Family, and where their cremation grounds used to be. The centrepiece of this group of buildings was a complicated and richly carved hive of domes suspended upon pillars, dedicated to Maharao Lakhpatji. The structure, one of the best examples of Kachchhi stone carving, was conceived at a time when the art of ornamentation and illustration had reached its aesthetic pinnacle and completely collapsed in the 2001 earthquake. The final bastion to the panorama's far right shields Patwadi gate from view. A few hundred yards closer to the Darbargarh is the early 17th-century Raghunaathji temple and its *aaro*, leading to the water's edge. Mahadev Gate is visible



View of the Clock Tower, Darbargarh. Severely affected by the earthquake, the Clock Tower, gave the intrepid 19th-century photographer an extraordinary bird's-eye view of the city.

Panoramic view of the walled city from the Darbargarh's Clock Tower, photographed probably in the 1920s.

toward the picture's top left, beyond Hatkeshwar Temple's *shikhar,* which is clearly visible along the lake's edge in the centre panel.

In the 1970s, Bhuj's inner-city developers began vying with one another to eventually build a kitsch mosaic of high-rise buildings without character which looked essentially one and the same; all of them seemed desperate to outdo the Clock Tower's vertical majesty. How different was their vision from the *salaat*'s carefully calibrated view of neighbourhood and building design? While new development control regulations in the city hope to prevent the unscrupulousness of highrise development, could these regulations ironically spawn a profusion of equally characterless buildings, each comparatively small in keeping with new regulations but still without aesthetic purpose and style?

Below: Lakhpatji's Chhatris, locally termed *chhattedis*, constructed over two hundred years beginning in 1819. The photograph below was taken probably in the late 1870s, and shows a covered ox-cart which may perhaps have brought a visiting lady to the premises.

Abdul Qadir Munshi (b. 1940)

I was part of a community of Kachchhi Meman Muslims living in Munshi Sheri in Soniwad (the other group lived in Bakshi Dela). "Munshi" means "one who writes" – our forefathers were experts in the Persian language, working as scribes at the Royal Court, often as tutors to the royal children. There were Hindu Munshis as well in Soniwad's Munshi Dela, just as there are both Hindu and Muslim Khattris living in Khattri Chakla. My ancestors did all the letter-writing and correspondence work for the King, and my forefathers were considered shrewd diplomats, too. But by the time the earthquake occurred in 2001, there were only two families left in Munshi Sheri: one was mine and the other my in-laws'.

My father used to tell me how, in the 1930s, Osmanbhai Fauzdar was the Bhuj City Inspector. My father-in-law, Abdul Aziz Shahbuddin, worked as Mamlatdar in Kutch for twenty-two years and retired in 1964. His father-in-law's father, Shahbuddinbhai, had thousand-year-old manuscripts and books in his library in Munshi Sheri, including encyclopaedias in English. He was an expert in Gujarati, English, Urdu, and Persian. Because of these two Munshi families, the street came to be known as Munshi Sheri.

I have very simple childhood memories of city life. Prior to 1947, when there was no electricity in Bhuj, lanterns used to be hung opposite the residences of VIPs such as the

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MKS Vijayarajji, photographed in the early 1920s, surrounded by his teachers.

Fauzdar, Mamlatdar, and Civil Surgeon. A lightman would come to light these lanterns when it got dark on winter evenings, equipped with a ladder, and slowly fill each lamp with oil. We children loved watching him do this, over and over again as he made his way down the street. Lanterns would be lit at about six or seven in the evening, and would die out in a couple of hours, so you had to finish your evening chores quickly to catch the streetlight before it extinguished itself. I remember watching each lantern die as its fuel was consumed, each post giving out smoke and its glass cover gradually going black.

In those days, wine was available from two wine breweries in Bhuj, one opposite the Jail Wall and the second just behind Vaniawad Gate at the *gadh rang*, behind what is now the Jantaghar (this was once a disreputable spot). School No. 9, near Vaniawad Gate, was in Pithavali Sheri and was irreverently known as the Pithavali (Breweryside) School.

I remember Ghodar Chowk, where the Maharao's horses used to be stabled and where you could look in through the gate, and I had the special privilege to venture inside; and I remember Savaiya Falia, Sejwala Matam and Dhan Sheri, the street from where herds of *dhan* (goats) passed through everyday.

The city was full of people working at different occupations. Dhobighat was opposite the Chhattedis, behind Ummed Bhavan, behind the present Swaminarayan Boarding School. Washermen in those days were Muslims, as were all barbers and Kumbhaars (potters). Khattris (people engaged in the tie-dye work of cloth) were a mix of Hindu and Muslim; Khatri Rangchuli was near Moluwali Mosque outside Sarpat Gate. And Jadejas shared several posts in the police ranks along with Muslims in those days.

Our street cleaner, an interesting man, passed by my house every day with his assistant. The two of them would drive a cart with two drums full of water, one steering and the other sprinkling water to settle the dust on roads. And we had a water carrier from Pakhaali Falia, who supplied us with water in large skins, squandering what he'd earned at the local liquor shop! Bhuj's drunkards were often those engaged in water-sprinkling work during the day-time. They would tie their bullocks to a peg and go to the wineshop. Intoxicated by spirits, they would emerge singing songs from old films and musicals, whistling away to keep from frightening themselves. Things got so bad that passers-by got into the habit of stashing their money safely away in a pocket stitched from heavy-duty thick cloth. My grandmother used to tell me that children would be hushed by being told that they had better fall asleep before the town's drunkards made their rounds.

When Dr. Rajendra Prasad, President of India, visited Bhuj in 1951, the city hosted a civic reception for him in the Lakhota (now Rajendra Bagh) arranged by the Municipality. Until then, the island could only be approached by boat, but during a drought in the

mid-1950s the lake was deepened by Chief Commissioner Desai, and excess clay and earth from the hollow used to construct an approach road to the Lakhota. Access to the garden became easier.

I remember several festivals in Bhuj. Diwali was celebrated by both Hindus and Muslims together; did you know that cracker-manufacturing was the monopoly of the Daudi Bohra community? My family got up early on the morning of Diwali, our men wore a new sherwani and pyjamas. It was fashionable to wear a white sherwani with brass buttons, with a dandy Kachchhi *pagdi* to boot.

I remember Holi, which used to be lit in Jethi Falia. The festival was celebrated together by Hindus and Muslims. My mother, Fatimabai, used to accompany women carrying the *indhoni* (a round cloth used to cushion pots on the head) on the day of Holi and it was believed that ones eyesight would improve were it to be thrown into the Holi fire. People used to walk round and round the Holi fire, Hindus as well as Muslims, offering flowers, coconut, and sugar, and prasad would then be distributed.

Aside from Diwali and Holi, our Hindu brethren regularly participated in Muharram *tazia* processions, and even financially supported them. Its route covered almost all of Bhuj. Khavas *rajput*s (not to be confused with Rajputs) contributed ornamental horses to the *tazia*s. People from both communities walked along, offering flowers and coconuts and making religious vows. I remember how people of both faiths – particularly ladies – used to pass (with their children) underneath the *tazia* during its procession. It was always a very public affair: women of both faiths often viewed the procession from neighbours' terraces.

You'd see four types of *tazia*, and each had a singular significance. The *rath* (the first float, a so-called chariot) consisted of two horses pulling a wheeled float. This was a specialty of the Siddi community, who are descended from foot-soldiers imported from Abyssinia and who continue to live in Bhuj to this day. The Siddis would perform African *dhamaal* dances in front of the *tazia*. *Siddi* women would sing folk songs in a high-pitched voice in memory of Imam Hussein. These songs would be so touching that those listening would come away with tears in their eyes. After the *rath* came the *tabut* (or square-shaped) *tazia*, *sej* (*minar*-shaped) *tazia*, and ornamental horse-figures made from wood that were elaborately decorated.

All these *tazia*s – about forty of them – would first gather in Bhid Chowk. The royal *tazia*s, sponsored by the State, would be waiting outside Sarpat Gate, near the police headquarters. By about three p.m., all *tazias* would converge on Bhid Chowk's *chabutara*. Thirty-five to forty *tazia*s would be arranged in a line, and the processions start from Bhid Chowk, moving via Vaniawad Sheri, Vania-*no*-*delo*, Vayda-*delo*, Dr. Mehta Street, Nagar Chakla, Uplipal Road, Pareshwar Chowk, Darbargarh Chowk (where the king

would be sitting to see the procession, would give offerings and coconut prasad would be distributed), the PWD office, Paburai Chowk, Jubilee Hospital, and finally to the open ground now outside Sarpat Gate where the *tazia*s would be cooled.

By about midnight, the first *tazia* would arrive there and the last by about two a.m. *Tazia*s would be covered with white cloth after the *fahteha*, a religious ritual. Thereafter, *tazias* would return to their respective places. Bhid businessmen would keep their shops open and watch the procession go by from their shops. The last three *tazias* would be preceded by eight to fifteen carts with water-filled drums, drawn by water carriers who came exclusively from the Pakhaali community, so named because they bore *pakhaal*s, or water bags, made of seasoned leather. It was mostly Hindus who arranged to sprinkle water on the roads from these carts.

We had three schools in Bhuj in my day: Patwadi School, where students from all communities used to study; Vaniawad School, which was generally populated with Nagar and Bania children; and the Bhid Mohammedan School, which enrolled Muslim, Kansara and Salaat students. There were few girls in school in those days. There was in fact a girls' school at Darbargarh, called the *kanya shala*. About seventy to eighty years ago, the first girls' school was begun at Patwadi Gate, a *kanya shala* in the Old Court at Panch Hatdi. Till 1959, we followed the Pune Board, and after 1960, the Gujarat SSCE Board came into being.

I went to Bhid School, which had been constructed with a donation from Kamu Suleiman Memon. Hasan bin Mohammed was then its headmaster. He was an Arab, a scholar of some repute, known for his mastery of Persian, Urdu, Arabic, Gujarati, and English. He used to sit at Pathanwali Mosque where everybody came to listen to him and was popular amongst students. I remember how he sported a walking stick, wearing a finger ring with a large *akik* stone, and a Kachchhi *pagdi*. He used to go to pray at two p.m. On his return from prayer, students would steal his walking stick from him and put it in a room, and then line up chanting, "Namaste, Sir". He died in 1952–1953. Many, many people of all faiths mourned his death and paid homage to him.

We were all rather excited at Jawaharlal Nehru's visit to Bhuj in 1951; all of us gathered at the Maharani Shri Gangasaheb Middle School opposite the bus station. When Nehru arrived, he patted a young girl standing to my side. I was most impressed: Nehru was tall, well-built, handsome, and with a very attractive personality. But it was all quite chaotic when he came; students and others started running about and the arrangements, I remember, completely collapsed!

IN CELEBRATION AND MOURNING

Refer to the map on pages 156–157 for monuments, sites and processional routes discussed in this chapter.

In the photographic frame, some subjects become a photographer's cultural staple, of which the royal train and processions of ritual celebration and mourning through the streets of Bhuj were a strikingly common theme in the turn-of-the-century city.

There were thirteen different versions of the royal mounted procession. Every year in August, for example, the royal Nagpanchmi procession wound its way around the old town, a riot of colour, music and choreographed dance, touching specific places with unfailing regularity. It marked the historic occasion when, in 1736, Ahmedabad's *subedar* Sher Buland Khan had been repelled by Maharao Deshalji's Kutch forces in Sher Khan's attempt to attack Bhuj. Although Sher Khan captured parts of the Bhujiyo fortress, the city's residents, a *jamaat* of Naga *bawa*s (ascetics) joined forces with the Kutch State Army and won a decisive battle, driving him back out of Kachchh.[74] This victory had been symbolically commemorated for three hundred years with a procession to the Bhujiyo mountain to honour the war dead at a little temple to the Naag deity, until Kutch joined the Indian Union in 1948 and such royal pageantry came to an end.

The processional route as analytical theme

The Nagpanchmi and Muharram *tazia* were two of thirteen different processions which wound their way around town, each with its complicated itinerary and trappings. Although such processions have long been the subject of historical comment, they take on added analytical significance today, especially after the earthquake of 2001. The *sawaari* took place along the main streets, and its path seems always to have been fixed, honed

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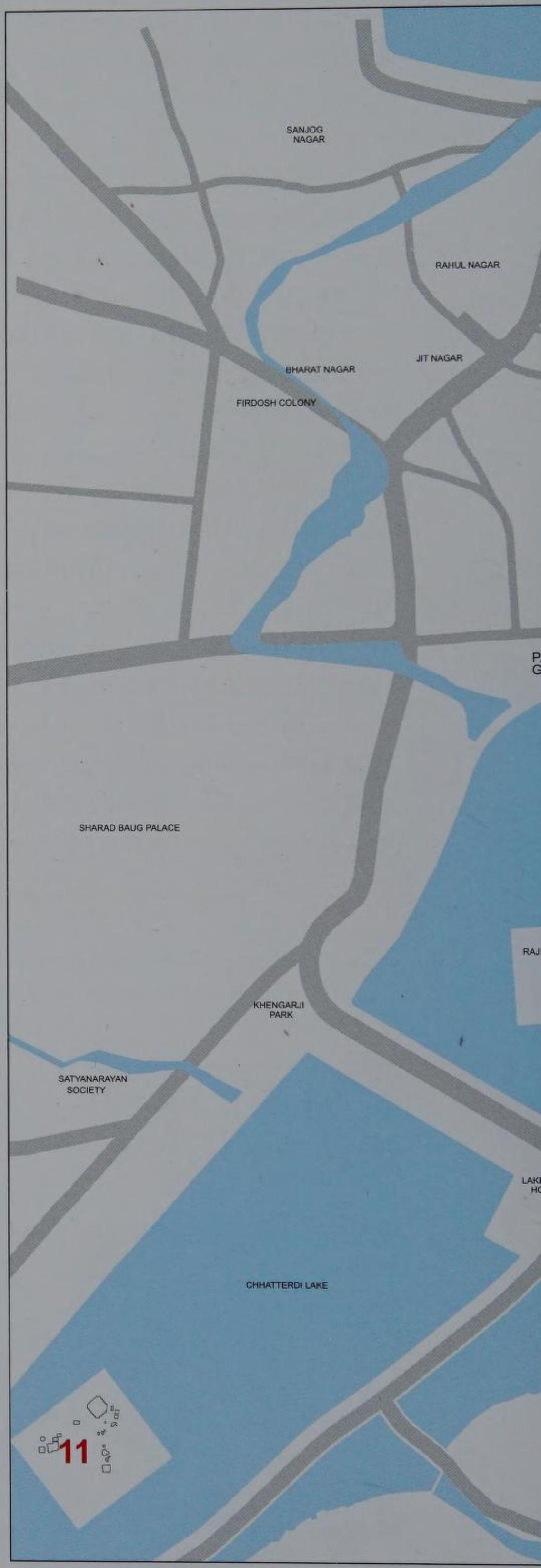
Crowds gather to watch a mounted procession through the walled city, possibly 1890s, Bhuj. Such photographs are rare, since photographers appear to have concentrated more on taking panoramic still pictures with little likelihood of blurring.



Map of the mounted royal processions in Bhuj. These began on the grounds of the Darbargarh, and proceeded toward the city's gates and beyond. The royal train made its way down the Saraf Bazaar Street on the occasion of Nagpanchmi every year. The Muharram *tazia* followed a more circuitous route as it wound its way down through several neighbourhoods, beginning in Bhid Chowk, and ending at Sarpat Gate.

1 The Darbargarh and Aina Mahal
2 The Old Vegetable Market, Saraf Bazaar
3 The Chavdi, Saraf Bazaar
4 The Old Court, Patwadi
5 The Naniba Sanskrut Pathshala, Patwadi
6 Fateh Mohammed's Khordo, Patwadi
7 Jubilee Hospital
8 Pavdi Ghat
9 The Chabutara in Bhid Chowk
10 Alfred High School
11 The Chhatris of Bhuj
12 Dedka vav, Nazar Bagh

by centuries of tradition. Its route was programmed such that the Maharao Deshalji I's train skirted significant religious and civic buildings. Or, is it possible that buildings of importance came to be constructed along the procession's path, drawing legitimacy from an established custom and capitalizing on the commercial viability, visibility, and convenience of being positioned so? Could the *sawaari* have shaped, and been shaped by, the interlacing of streets? How is this relevant to our reading of the city?

Tracing the route of the *sawaari* on a map becomes a fascinating barometer of continuity and change in analyzing the pattern of current-day streets, if one were to superimpose the pattern of old processional routes on a network of new roads being developed after the earthquake. Since there were thirteen processional routes, we have enough fodder to plot historic buildings to gauge how they came to become local landmarks, and how a shift in street pattern affects both the processional route and its attendant landmarks. It also gives us an opportunity to examine more closely the potential of landmark buildings as opportunities for future redevelopment, a few of which appear in the sections which follow. Curiously, the diagram we are left with is a reassuring imprint in which it is clear that the town planning process would have affected these routes only perfunctorily, since in most cases the orientation and layout of streets has been maintained by urban planners.

Following the procession in the photographer's footsteps makes for an impromptu city tour (see map on pages 156–157). The Nagpanchmi procession (see p. 149 above) began with royal elephants being readied at the Darbargarh, proceeding to the Bhujiyo fort through Holi Chakla gate, along Saraf Bazaar Road straight down to Bhid Gate, stopping en route at the Sankadwala-*pir-ni-dargah*. The photographer's best vantage point from which to record multiple exposures was from the first floor of the early 18th-century Police *Chavdi* (the earliest such *chowki* in Kachchh, see page 182), where he would adventurously perch his camera to lean out at intervals and record pictures of the procession and the street which framed it. The details of the procession are fascinating, and one can only imagine the reality of its colourful train, depicted in the commemorative scrolls painted by a Kamaagar artist in Bhuj, and now stored at the Aina Mahal Museum.

But not every procession was celebratory. The Muharram *tazia*, by contrast, a much-feted event to mark the tragic death of the Prophet Muhammad's grandson Hussein and his family at the hands of their adversary Yazid on the plain of Karbala, used to be a familiar sight every year in Bhuj, and involved both Muslims and Hindus. As in the case of the Nagpanchmi *sawaari*, the *tazia* followed a predictable route. Photographers were therefore able, in both cases, to position themselves in time-tested places to record the event. The *tazia* procession began from Bhid Chowk and made its way down Saraf Bazaar until it turned through Dr. Mehta Street into Vaniawad Chowk. It would then proceed through Nagar Chowk, emerging from Mahadev Gate up Uplipal Road to Pareshwar Chowk,

finally making a dramatic entrance on to Holi Chakla (now, Darbargarh Chowk). From here, its colourful train continued past the old police station, turning a sharp left toward Mal Falia to Soniwad and Paburai Chowk, and completing its journey at Sarpat Gate.

A royal procession returning from Bhid Gate. The elephant sports the Maharao's howdah of gold, with an *ambadi* (canopy) that was used only in morning processions and where the Maharao would be seated when returning from Bhid during Nagpanchmi. However, the howdah on this occasion is empty. Further down the procession, barely visible, is a canopied passenger, possibly a member of the royalty. Given this unusual assortment, it would be difficult to ascertain the procession's occasion.

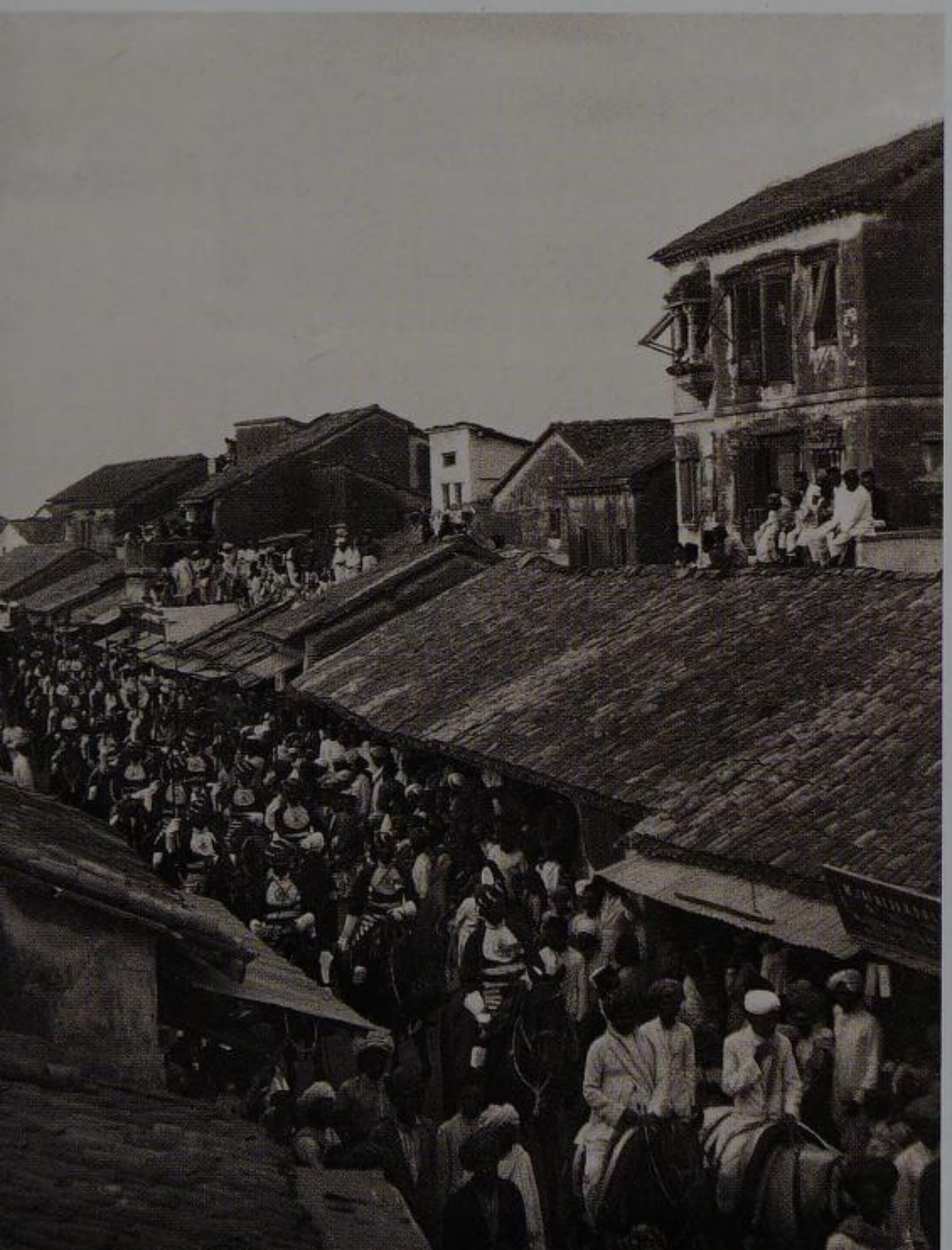
Facing page:

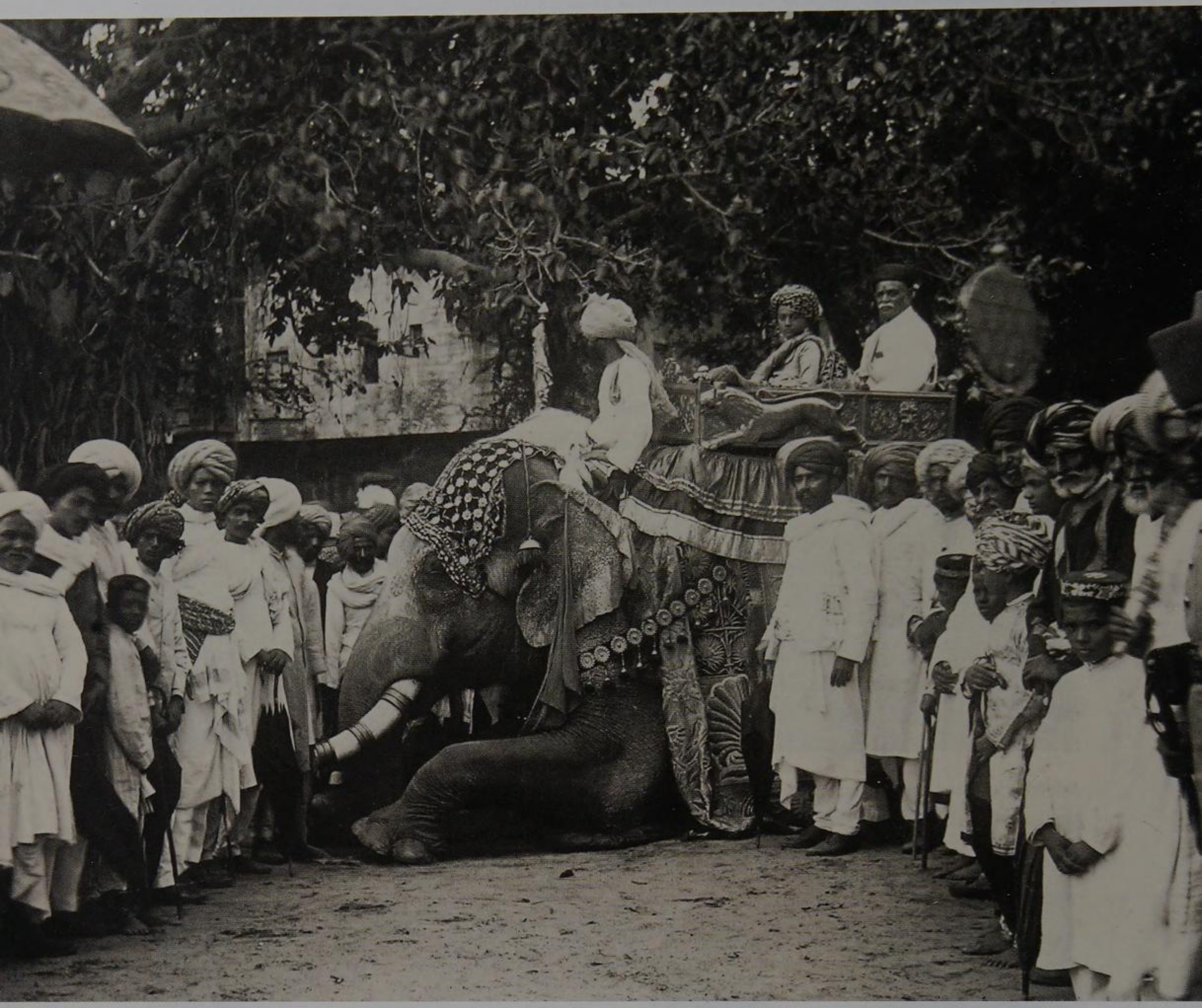
Above: A court attendant carries the Kutch *nishaan*, or royal Kutch State ensign, *nagaara* and *jhaj* on a pole as he rides a cow elephant down Danda Bazaar. A small shop sign at the bottom far right marks a cutlery business belonging to "M. Jafarji and Sons", opposite what is G.H. Noorbhai's shop today. The taller building behind it stored barrels of dye for a colour merchant. The procession includes a line of attendants on camel-back carrying *Mahi-muratibs*, insignia gifted by Mughal emperors to the Court of Kutch and its vassals for its loyalty to the Mughal Empire. KS Dilipsinhji has noted that, in one instance, "the *Mahi-Muratibs* were bestowed in 1757 as a token of appreciation by the Mughal Emperor Alamgir II to Maharao Shri Lakhpatji who was personally given the title of Mirza Maharao. Besides including the traditional replica of the fish in gold, the insignia included a golden hand [and] the head of a lion with tongue [extended]. This was [unique] as it denoted the slaying of [a] wounded lion by Rao Shri Khengarji I and the [rescue] of Sultan Mohamed Bighada of Ahmedabad from [its] attack; therefore, this was found nowhere else except in Kutch...One camel rider is depicted carrying a gold pitcher atop a flag pole. In actual practice, [there were] at least six such gold pitchers on the flag staffs." See KS Dilipsinhji, *Kutch in Festival and Custom*, p.44. This scene was captured in the early 1930s, the photographer positioning himself on the first floor of the Police *Chavdi*, opposite the Old Vegetable Market.

Below: Maharao Khengarji III and his grandson KS Madansinhji, travelling in an open palanquin in an unidentified procession, seen here as they proceed past the Old Vegetable Market down Saraaf Bazaar, moving towards the Darbargarh. As in many instances, the photographer positioned himself on the first floor of the Police *Chavdi* to shoot this photograph sometime in the late 1920s.

Below left: View of a procession down Danda Bazaar in the early 1930s. Soon after the Maharao's elephant came the Diwan of Kutch followed by two dignitaries, an officer and *jagirdar* on horseback. These were followed in turn by bodyguards, and these in turn by a group of *siddi syed*s, descendents of the company of *syed*s supplied as footsoldiers by Mahmud Beghada of Ahmedabad to Rao Khengarji I.

Below right: Maharao Khengarji III and his grandson KS Madansinhji in an open palanquin in an unidentified procession, as they proceed down Danda Bazaar during Rudrani Ashtami sometime in the late 1920s.





Above: Madansinhji with Diwan Chunilal Sarabhai seated behind him. Others in the tableau include the mustachioed court jester, "Bhanji Bhukh", Piru Khan, and the *siddi* Mian Abdul Sultan. This particular elephant had a single tusk.

Facing page:

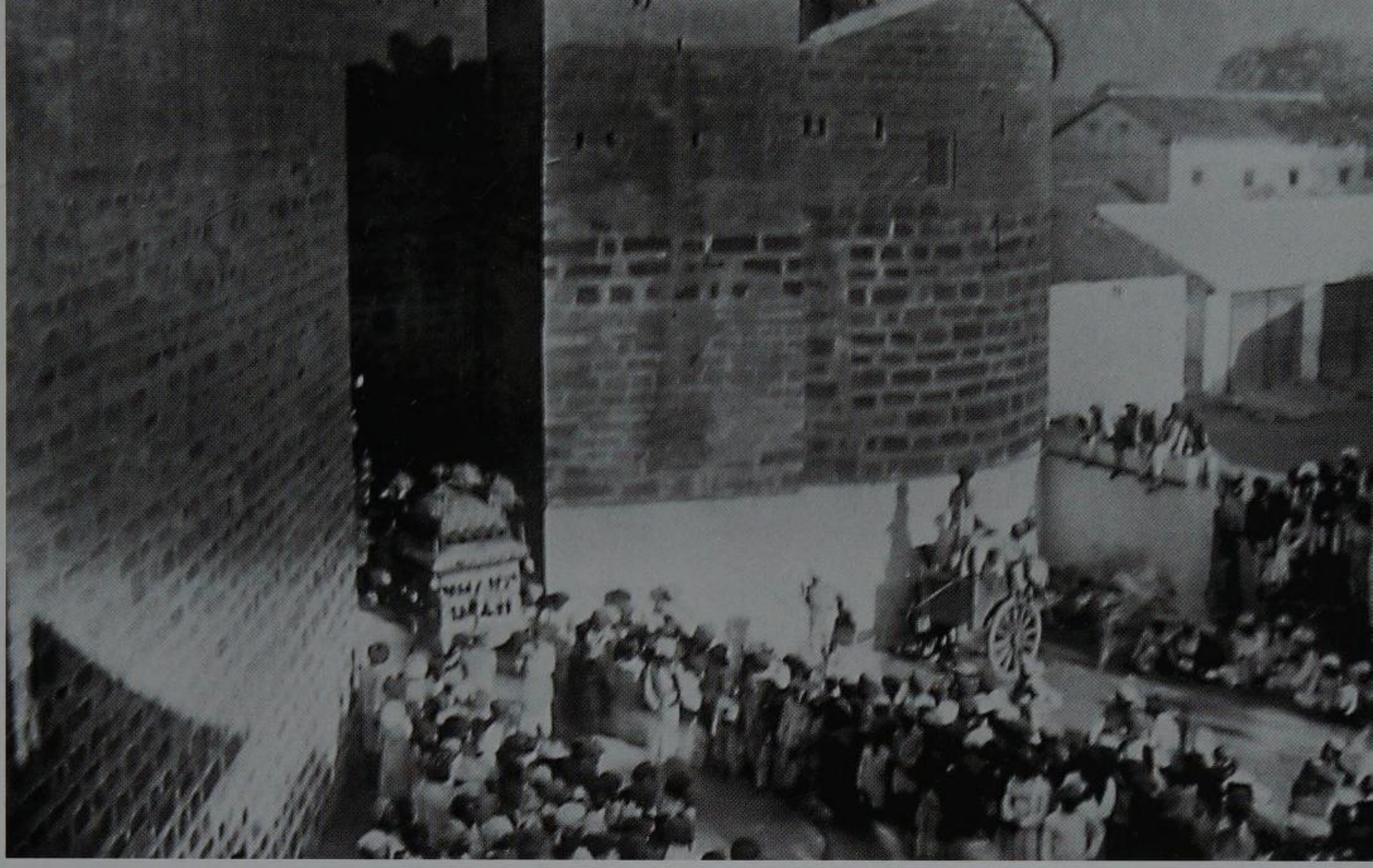
Above: KS Jorawarsinhji's wedding *nikaasi* in 1942 as it wends its way through Bhid. The Maharao's procession is moving toward Bhid Gate on elephant-back. The scene may have been photographed from the balcony of the *chabutara* of Bhid, from a minaret of the Sankadwala-*pir-ni-dargah*, or from atop Bhid Gate itself. The Maharao's car is parked to the picture's far left. Sarosh Naoroji, the Keeper of the Privy Purse, organized a *prasthana* (symbolic tokens of betelnut, vermillion and rice wrapped into a bundle) on the occasion, which is borne by the Maharao as he proceeds through the town.

Centre: A royal procession as it wends its way past the Sankadwala-*pir-ni-dargah* en route to Bhid Gate, photographed probably in the 1880s. The Maharao is on elephant-back, with the diwan seated behind him, *chamar* in hand.

Below: A royal procession returning from Bhid Gate during Nagpanchmi, approaching the Sankadwala-*pir-ni-dargah* in the 1870s.

Above: The Muharram *tazia* beginning its route in Bhid Chowk, with Bhid School possibly in the background. Photographed c. 1925.

Below: The *tazia* procession in Bhid Chowk, c. 1930.



Above: As the *tazia* procession passed beneath on its way to Pareshwar Chowk, the women of the zenana sat and watched from latticed windows in the Darbargarh's wall. When the *tazia* faced the *nagaara khana*, the Khangi Khata (Privy Purse) offered the *tazia* a *chaddar* (two coconuts and a *kori* or two). To take this picture, the photographer climbed to the top of the *nagaara khana*, where musicians sat to perform their *naubat baazi* every morning at the crack of dawn. "During the monarchy, the space to the front [top right] was empty and used as a State garage. After Independence, an Indian Airlines office began operating here. Later, the followers of the Appajbapa sect bought the land and built a Swaminarayan temple. When the King proceeded through the arch [at left], the ground under it had to be dug for the *bajaaniya* on stilts, his elephants, and his howdah to pass without hindrance." From interviews with KS Dilipsinghji, Bombay, and Umiyashankar Ajani, Bhuj.

Below left: The *tazia*, led by a ceremonial decorative *daldar* horse, as it passes by Sarpat Gate. The Jubilee Hospital appears at far left. Photographed sometime in the 1920s.

Below right: A special *tazia* being prepared for the Maharao in Tazia Chowk, Camp, c. 1930. To the right is the Old Post Office building.

Valjibhai Thakkar (b. 1912)

I have always collected coins, and have published books on them. Have you seen our traditional Kachchhi currency? If you haven't, it is on display at the Kutch Museum in Bhuj, although after the earthquake the coins must have been put away for safekeeping. Kutch's coins were unique before Independence in 1947, and our currency symbolized our *Kachchhiyat*, our essential oneness, something which made us stand out from the rest of India before Independence because the British never tried to force changes on us and our currency. So we actually had to devise an exchange rate for the rupee!

In the 1930s, the smallest unit of coin was of copper, and was called a *trambiyo*. Three such coins made up a *dhinglo*. Two *dhinglo*s made one *dhabbu*, which was an eighth of a *kori*. Five *kori*s in turn made one *panchio*, which was the largest unit of coin in the state. *Kori*s and *panchiya*s were made of silver, and all the others of copper. These were all minted in the Tankshal, the Old Treasury. Now imagine what the average person's salary was in those days; a person's monthly salary was 62.5 *kori*s. A clerk earned a monthly salary of 40 *koris*; a head clerk, 60 *koris*; the Deputy Mamlatdar, 200 *koris*; Mamlatdar, 300 *koris*; the Revenue Commissioner, paid by the Indian Government, Rs. 300; a Waris Court judge, Rs. 300; a teacher, 40 *koris*; and a school headmaster, 50 *koris*. Compare this with today!

Khengarji III on elephant-back, on his return through Bhid on the occasion of the Nagpanchmi festival. The photograph was taken possibly close to Bhid Gate, and the Maharao is accompanied by Jadurambhai Bhatt, then *nayab* diwan and president of the Jadeja court. Bhanjibhuk, the court jester, appears in this photograph with his characteristic moustaches, as do the courtiers Kanjibhai Zhala and Vaghuba, a *khawaas* superintendent of the royal *ghodar* (stables).

I was always one for festivals. Today I see my great-grandchildren flying kites on Makar Sankranti and I am reminded of the fact that I flew kites, too, when I was very young. But it also had more to do with eating sweets, *khichdo*, and laddoos full of ghee. Things have really changed these days.

My favourite festival was always the Nagpanchmi procession as it wound its way through the city of Bhuj. It was an exciting spectacle; I regularly watched it go by our house off Kansara Bazaar every year. There is a famous scroll depicting it in the Kutch Museum.

Let me describe it for you, because I remember it well and I watched it so often. The procession would start at the Sangalwala-*pir-ni-dargah*, winding its way through Bhid Chowk down to Saraf Bazaar Road. It would end at Darbargarh Chowk, then known as Holi Chakla. At its head would be Arab women singing in Arabic and dancing. After them came drums, cannon, a horse cavalry, sages clad in loincloth, and then bulls with gold-studded horns pulling the float of the Ashapura goddess. Then came the effigy of Goddess Mahakali and later a platoon of armour carriers, moving with strict discipline. After this would be the "Bakshi", who would be responsible for the *asavaari*; the Kutch state military police; camels draped with flags; banners to Lord Hanuman; and a metal pot full of holy Ganges water. These would be followed by Maharao Lakhpatji's "*mahi-muratib*" and lion faces, again an armoured platoon, and then stilted *bajaaniya* swordsmen elevated on bamboo poles – a sight everybody was eager to see. These stilted swordsmen would be so important that the ground had to be dug three feet under the archway to Holi Chakla so that they could pass through. They always received a warm applause from people.

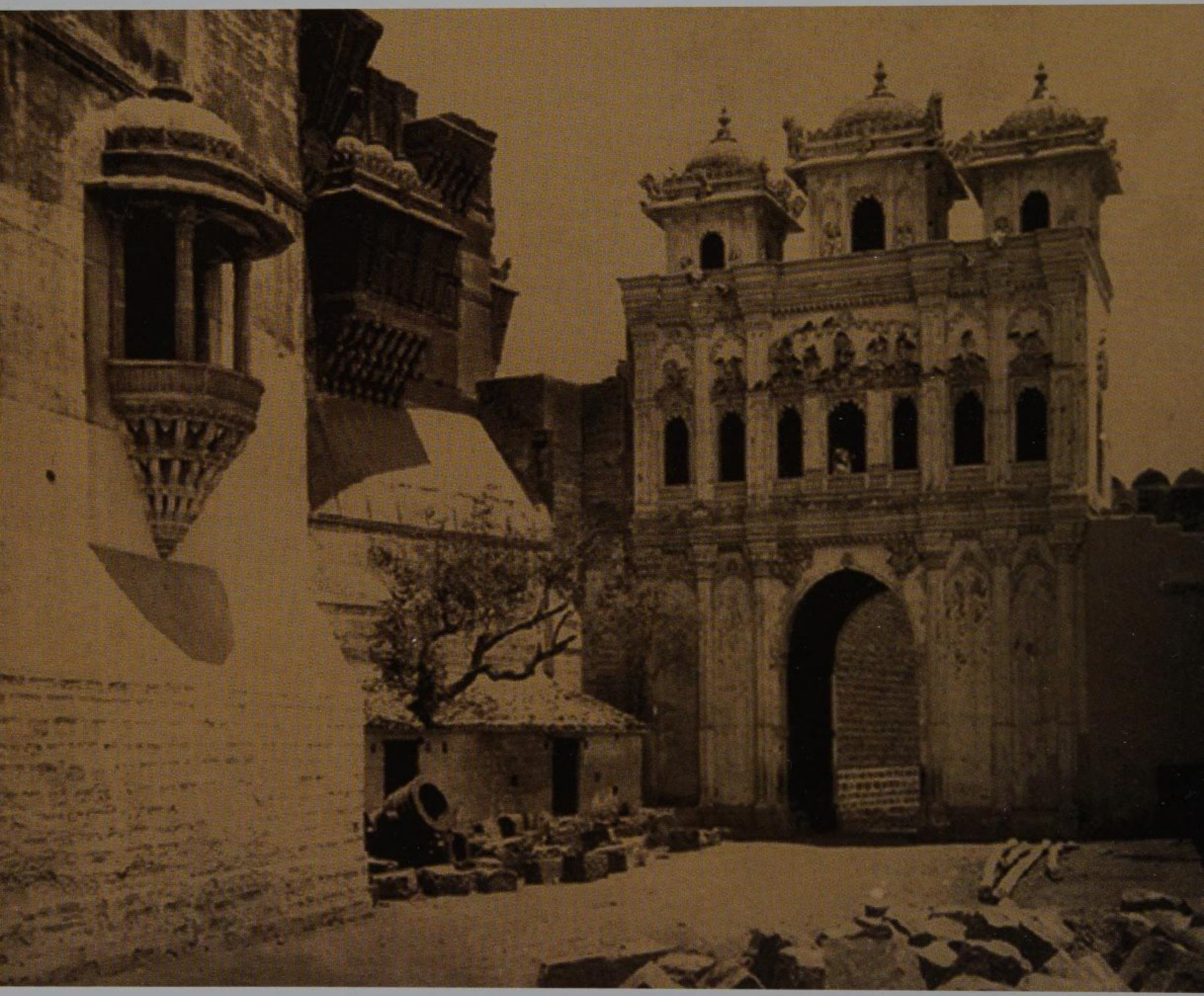
After the stilted swordsmen, a clutch of archers, carts decorated with satin frills and pulled by bullocks, singers of classical music, an elephant with a silver howdah, more singers, and then finally, sitting in a gold seat on an elephant, the Maharao himself. Behind him sat the *diwan* who took care of the king's needs. I still remember that the minute the king on his elephant came into sight, all the tradesmen used to stand up and shout "*Ghani khamma Bawa ne*!" At the same time, the guard walking to the right of the elephant would shout "*Khudawind ke baaye haath pe…*[Name]*…ki salaam ko nigah rakhen Meherbaan salaamat*!" And then the king would look all around him. At this, the elephant would march ahead. The people in the crowd would try to attract the Maharao's attention by shouting "*Jiye Ra*! *Jiye Ra*!" as he went by.

Behind the Maharao's elephant would be his horse guard, the Sayyad Mallik heads of state, landlords, drummers, and finally a camel-riding drummer. This *sawaari* used to last for about an hour and was very exciting. People would be mesmerized and look on in awe at this unearthly splendour. Fortunately, the procession has been recorded by Kamaagari artists in paintings preserved in the Kutch Museum and in the Aina Mahal glass museum.

1. The Darbargarh and the Aina Mahal

The Darbargarh consists of four buildings, each tied to the other in a series of courtyard-like arrangements, and dating back at least to the mid-1500s, when Khengarji I purportedly drove a nail into the ground to symbolically establish his city. The oldest surviving of these four, the Aina Mahal, was once the pleasure palace of the Raos and Maharaos of Kachchh, and was badly damaged in the earthquake of 2001. Commissioned in the 18th century by Maharao Lakhpatji, the "Glass Palace" presents a potpourri of interior art which draws from Kachchhi vernacular and high style, Mughal, and Dutch influences.[75] Many of its finer details have miraculously survived, owing to the fact that its skeleton is of wood frame construction filled with masonry. The Aina Mahal's exterior facades have unfortunately crumbled almost completely in the earthquake, and require urgent conservation.

The *nagaara khana*, Darbargarh, photographed in the early 1870s.



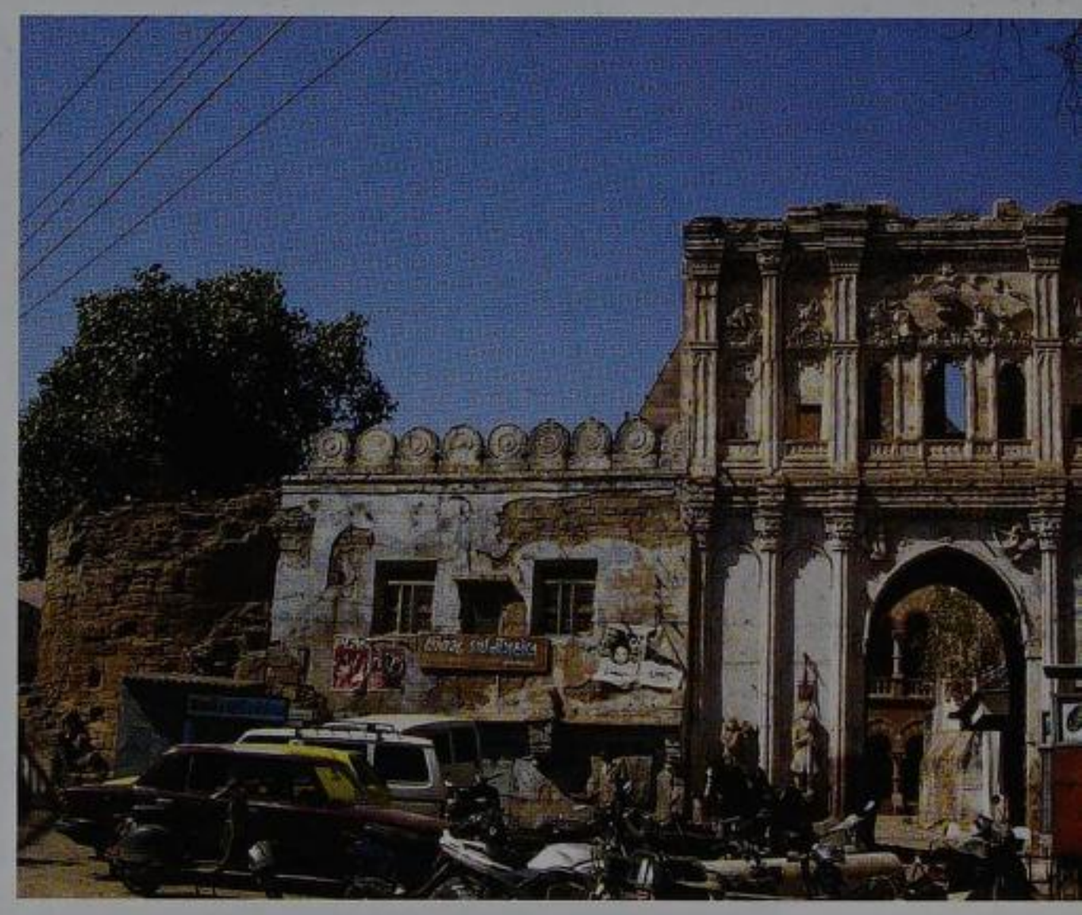
The most interesting and important object in the city, is the palace of His Highness Rao Daisuljee, the ruling prince of Cutch. It is a large white stone building, decorated with beautiful carvings, and fine fretwork, in the same style as the ornaments of the palace at Mandavie. These, being more modern than the rest of the building, were probably added by Ram Sing. The inner courts of the palace are gained through a number of passages and gateways occupied by Arab guards, and decorated with their weapons…

We will now enter the palace, and, accompanied by his Highness, who feels great delight in displaying its curiosities to his English visitors, we will traverse his lofty and gaily decorated apartments.

The Rao is usually found seated in his private reception-chamber, a small room, the walls of which are hung with swords, shields, matchlocks, and a curious variety of other weapons, of which his Highness seems most to value a beautifully inlaid gun, presented to him by Sir John Malcolm, on his visit to Cutch in 1830. During his hours of relaxation from the cares of business, the Rao is frequently attended by a negro giant, a sort of royal jester, who throws himself into all sorts of contortions, and displays an agility in the performance of his antics, which excites the risible faculties of his Highness to their greatest extent, keeping him in a convulsion of laughter at the monster's efforts.

The public apartments of the palace consist of the Hall of Audience, in which the Durbars are held, the State Apartment, and the Furwaneh Khana, or Hall of Fountains. The last of these, which contains a great number of jets-d'eau, is set apart for the exhibition of water-works, and on the festivals of the Dussorah, Dewallah, &c., is brilliantly illuminated. Adjoining this hall, and leading from it by a richly ornamented door, is the State Apartment, which, in fact, is a small room, contained in the centre of a saloon of large dimensions; and, being the very core of the palace, forms its sanctum, or most venerated spot. It is about eight feet square, and its chief ornament is a state-bed, bearing the richly gemmed sword of Rao Gore, a cruel and profligate prince, who succeeded his father, Rao Lacca, in the government of Cutch, in the year 1760. Rao Gore was accustomed to use this apartment during his hours of pleasurable relaxation, and to his taste it is indebted for its singular decorations.

The *nagaara khana* after the 2001 earthquake.

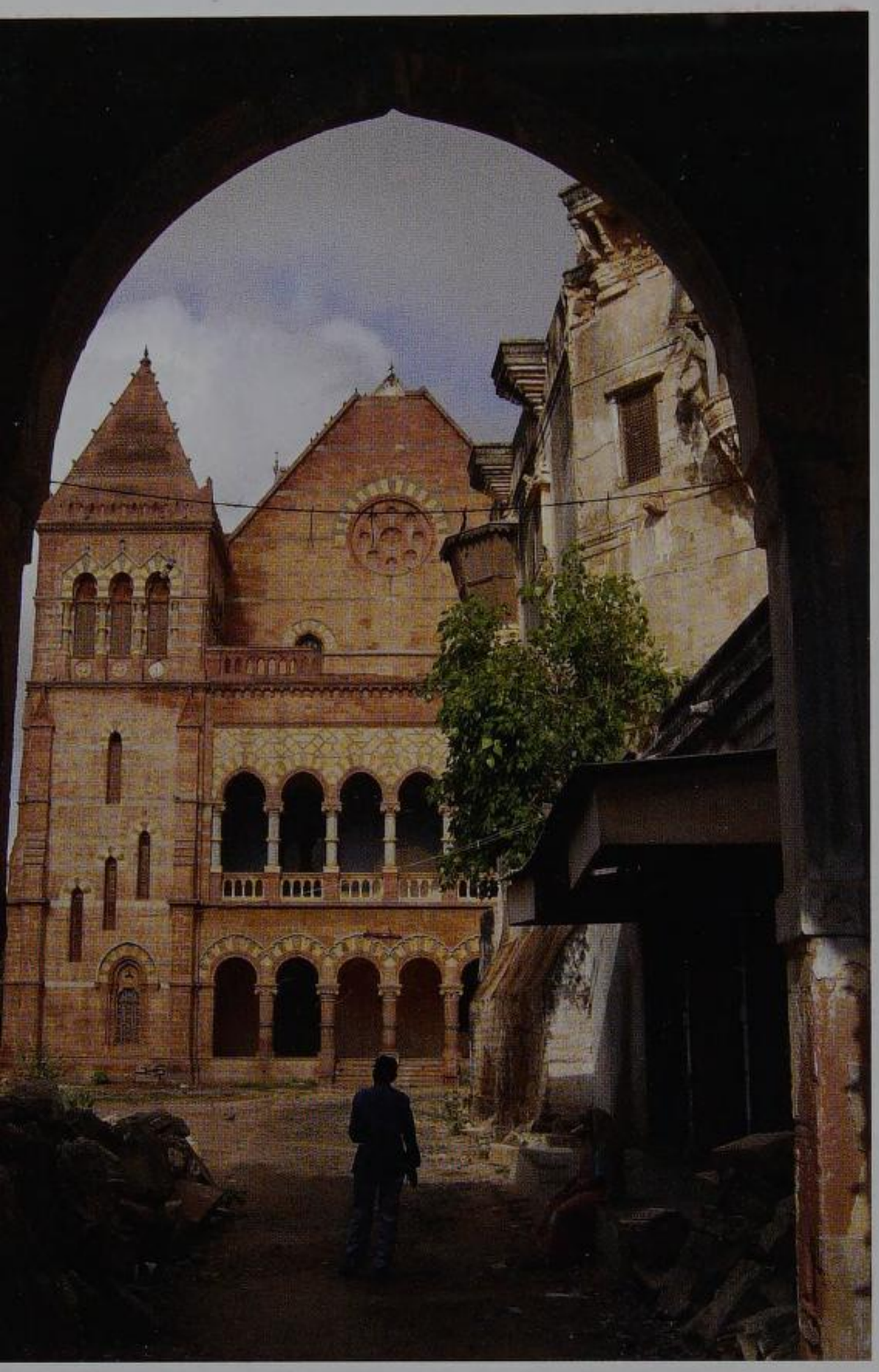


Above: "Palace of Rao of Cutch, Bhuj", 1856. "Watercolour by an anonymous artist working in the Western India/Cutch style, c. 1856. The image is inscribed: 'H.H. the Rao's Palace.'" The painter is seated approximately where the Prag Mahal is now, looking out at the rest of the palace complex. The painting depicts the zenana with its wooden *jharokha* latticed windows, and to its right the *nagaara khana* gate. The Rao's apartments appear at top left. By permission of The British Library, London.

Below left: The *nagaara khana*, Darbargarh, Bhuj, 2004.

Below right: View of the zenana in 2003.

Facing page: Lord Curzon's arrival in Bhuj in 1902. Glasses filled with coloured water and floating wicks were suspended from the wall of the zenana, to lend the atmosphere some colour.

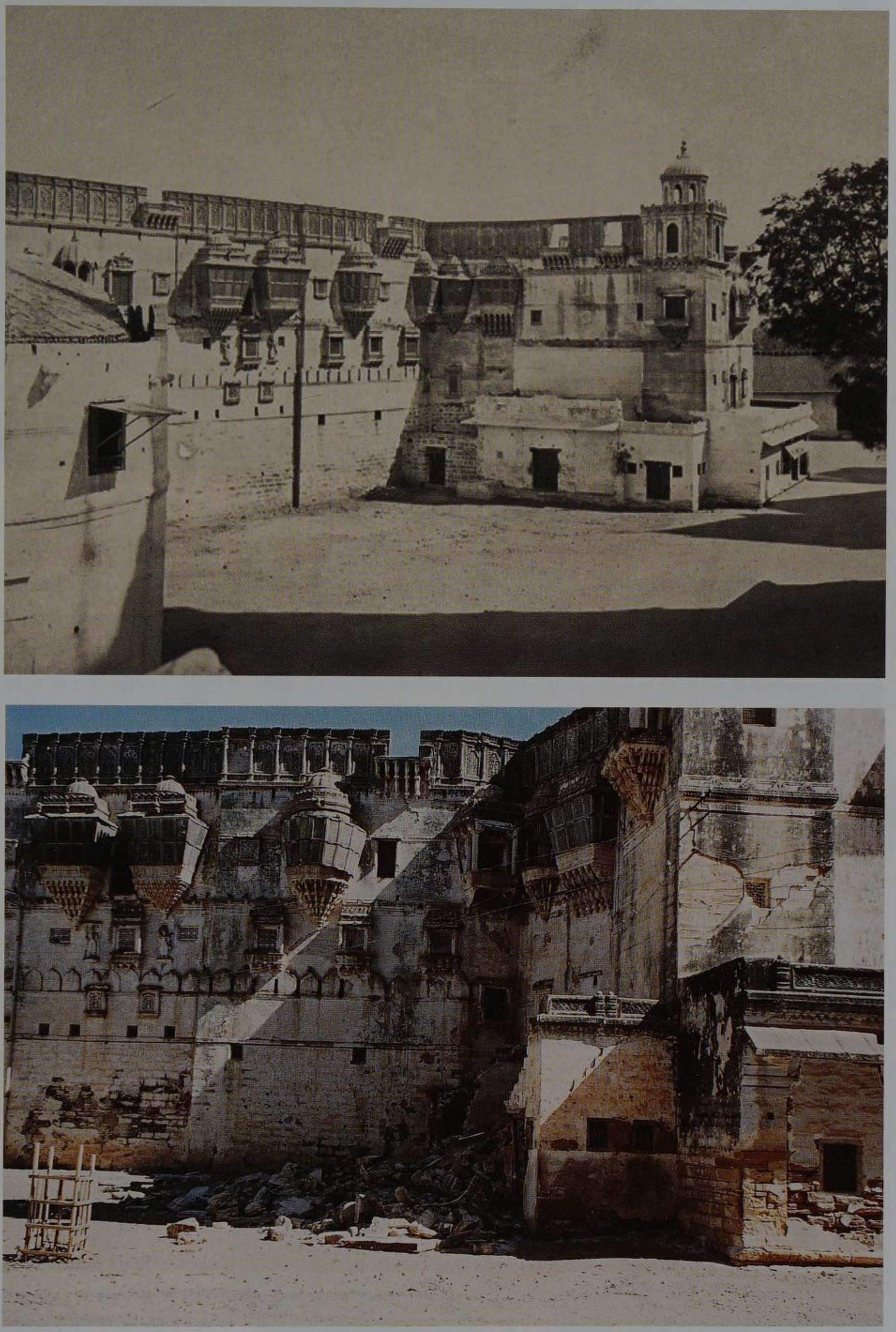


Through the *nagaara khana* towards Prag Mahal, 2004.

In order to preserve the dignity of this spot, the present Rao visits it at stated periods, with an appearance of some ceremony, and much true respect; on the occasion of our visit he accompanied us *cicerone*.

...I must request [the reader] to imagine himself introducd, by some whole-sale glass dealer, to his sample room, where, amongst the jelly glasses, and old vases, and introduced some half dozen antique musical clocks, all playing at once, and the whole display brilliantly illuminated by large wax candles, and noon-day! This mental picture may then afford him some idea of the motley and incongruous *mélange* of ornament, which contributes to the regal magnificence of this most dazzling of state-apartments. The presence of the clocks, some antique pictures, a celestial and a terrestrial globe, are attributed to the redoubtable Ram Sing, who is said to have brought them with him from Holland. The hall which encloses this singular apartment, is ornamented by a succession of pillars, pier-glasses, and pictures in rich and massy frames. The floor is remarkably unpleasant to walk on, being inlaid with a sort of small Dutch tile. The roof and pillars are decorated with rich gold mouldings, and other ornaments, much too faded to afford material for description; and the small compartments between them are supplied with fittings of triangularly shaped looking-glass. The pictures, which nearly cover the walls, are either horrible copies, or the worst possible prints, from the old English and Dutch masters. Amongst them are, Hogarth's "Rake's Progress," – sundry portraits of Lady Carteret, in stomacher and *toupée* – with here and there a dismal-looking shepherdess, or a snuff-coloured *belle* of the Rao's own family, executed by a Chinese artist. On leaving these apartments, and returning to the Hall of Audience, – "Will't please you to go see the wrestlers," is, in other words, the Rao's general invitation to his guests; and he at once leads them to a carpeted and drapiered balcony, looking over the courts of the palace, which are crowded by anxious spectators. Behind his Highness's chair stand slaves, gracefully waving punkahs of ostrich and peacock's feathers round his superbly ornamented turban; and below him are ranged the wrestlers, fine Rajpoots in the prime of life, displaying a symmetry of form and a development of muscular power, not unworthy the gymnasium theatres of ancient Greece.[76]

The Prag Mahal, the royal *durbar* and mansion built in the Victorian Gothic style by Maharao Pragmalji II in the mid-19th century, stands adjacent to the Aina Mahal, and is at odds stylistically with the tableau of buildings which frame the Darbargarh's quiet square.



Above: The rani *vas*, by an unknown photographer, late 1870s. The palace dates from the 18th century. By permission of The British Library, London.

Below: The little store room at the foot of the rani *vas* was severely damaged in the 2001 earthquake.

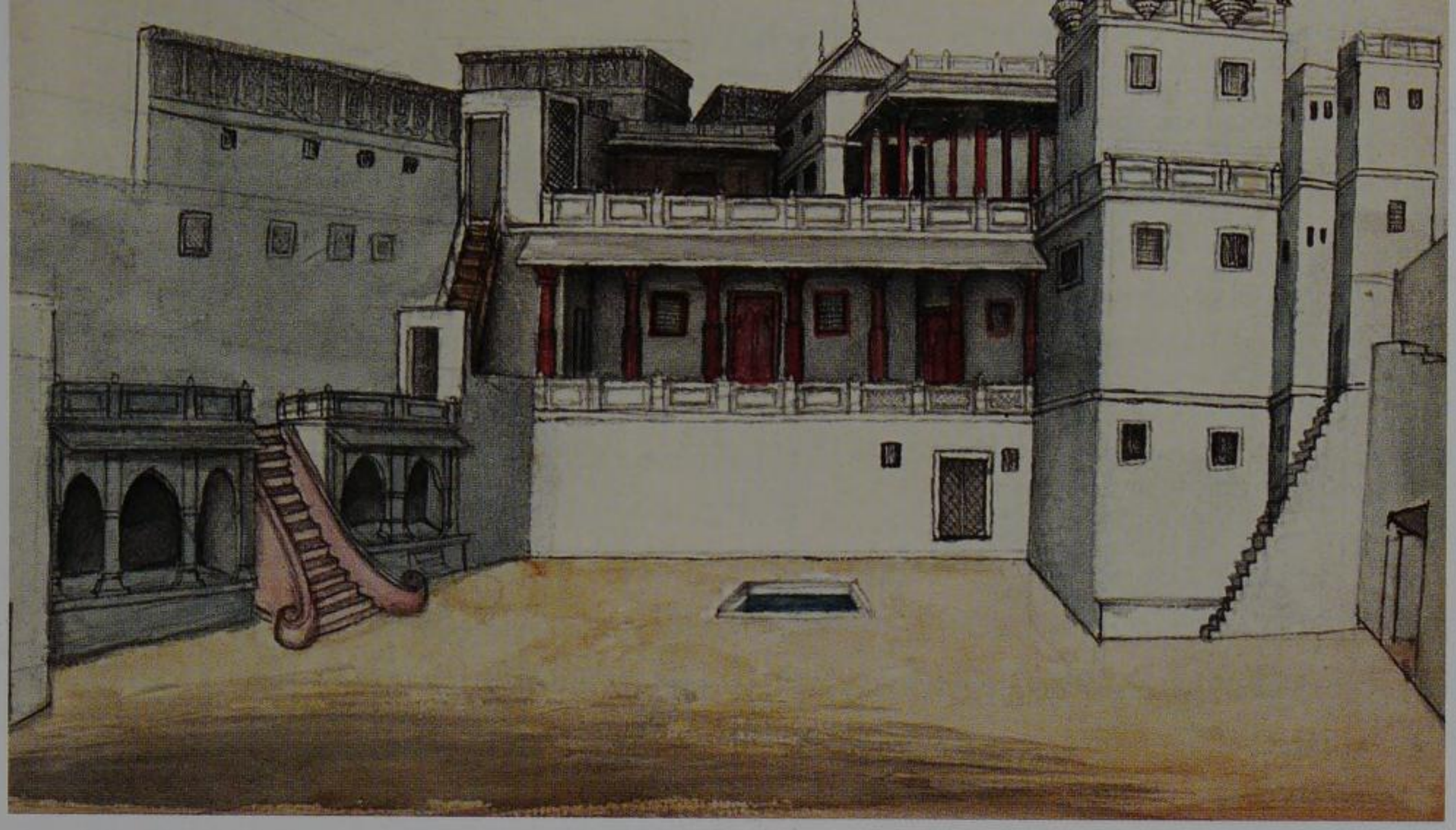
Detail of carved stonework, rani *vas*, Darbargarh, 2004.

About 1865, the late Rao Pragmalji, from designs prepared by Colonel Wilkins of the Royal Engineers, began a lordly building on a site formerly used for stables and outhouses. The plan provided for a Darbar hall eighty feet by forty, and forty feet high to the springing of the roof, with arched verandahs all around and corner towers. Level with the Darbar hall runs a suite of seven rooms, five at right angles to the others, forming the ladies' quarters. Staircases lead to an upper floor with a suite of rooms corresponding to those on the first floor. A clock tower, 150 feet high, is connected with the main building by covered galleries. The rooms and verandahs are well-proportioned and lofty, the verandahs arched and open to the outside. The capitals and bases are all carved from special designs. The gallery floors are laid with tessellated Carrara marble, and some of the rooms are paved with Minton tiles. The walls and ceilings of both rooms and galleries are painted in oil colours, each tower and gallery with a different design. The balusters of the gallery parapets are of variegated marble, many of them quarried in Cutch. The original design of the interior of the Darbar hall was Gothic with an open roof. But the late Rao was induced to have the hall decorated in the Italian style. A ceiling covered in the open roof, and from huge zinc rosettes chains were hung for chandeliers. The rest of the ceiling is ornamented with cupids and allegoric paintings. Round the hall runs a pure white gallery supported by caryatides. The doors below, and the windows above, are arched, and decorated with figured plate glass. Between each door are marble columns, and the whole is resplendent with gilding and painting. At one end of the hall is a full length portrait of Rao Pragmalji.[77]

Facing page:
Above: Courtyard of the Rao's palace, Bhuj. "Watercolour drawing of the courtyard of the Rao's palace, Bhuj, by an anonymous artist working in the Western India/Cutch style, c. 1856. The image is inscribed: 'H.H. the Rao's Court.'" Note that the collonaded balcony was once open, but is now closed and is part of the Aina Mahal Museum. By permission of The British Library, London.

Centre: The same courtyard, photographed sometime in the 1870s.

Below: The steps to the devastated courtyard, photographed after the earthquake in 2004.



The Clock Tower survived several aftershocks in the 2001 earthquake, but its masonry has been displaced markedly, leaving the impression that this building is on the verge of collapse.

Two additional private quarters complement these two buildings. One is the rani *vas* (zenana *khana*), where the royal queens and women of the royal household kept their apartments; the *aatariya*, where Khengarji I slept adjacent to the Aina Mahal; and the last is the Man Vilas, with its gardens and decorative pavilions that have recently been moved to Ranjit Vilas.

The complex's conservation and future use is still in question, and warrants urgent review. Measured drawings of the Darbargarh and its buildings have been prepared over the years by a number of conservation architects, and were most recently drafted by the Centre for Environmental Planning and Technology (CEPT) in 2001. Some work to scaffold the Aina Mahal protectively with wooden supports to prevent further collapse was undertaken in 2002 by the conservation architect Narendra Vasavada with a grant provided by USAID through FICCI and CARE. The problem at one level is an urgent need to bring different "stakeholders" in the complex's future together to the table, to discuss the possibility of adapting its buildings as a magnet for tourism and civic use. The need of the hour is for a clear plan of action, beginning with incisive research and compiling disparate documentation, and ensuring that all its

Left: View of the *nana* durbar at far left, photographed from the terrace to the zenana. Khengarji III's state kitchens were housed on its first floor. The *aatariya* where the Maharao spent his nights was at far right.

Below: KS Jorawarsinhji's wedding in 1942, with guests on the balcony of the Aina Mahal watching a performance in the open space beneath. Others present in the tableau of royalty include (from left to right) Prince Naranji, Jethisinhji, MKS Bhupatsinhji, Maharao Pragmalji III, MKS Himmatsinhji, KS Dilipsinhji, Maharao Vijayarajji, MKS Godji, and KS Jorawarsinhji. The space in front of this balcony was open to more public festivities as well, as on New Year's Day: "Beneath, on the large grounds, started a fireworks show. To see this, people used to come in large crowds. Once the *balashi* gave the signal, the fireworks began. In Bhuj, the production, handling and lighting of fireworks was under the guidance of Valibhai Meman and his friend Muhammad. The fireworks were lit outside the Aina Mahal on New Year's, and at the Kharsra Ground on Dhanteras, Kalichandas and Diwali." From an interview with Umiyashankar Ajani, Bhuj.

Above: Entrance to the *khili sthapna*, tucked against the steps at the right of this photograph, taken sometime in the 1870s. The steps led up to the Accountant General's office. Khengarji's restrooms and *aatariya* (a trough for sand used for wrestling) were at the very top, the entrance to the zenana directly in front, the Bakshi Khata's (Master of Ceremony's) offices at far left, and the Aina Mahal on the first floor at left. The Rang Mahal, where Khengarji III's jewellery and finery were stored, is at top right. The open terrace hosted a *kacheri* on the occasion of Ashaadi Chander.

Below: Maharao Khengarji III's daughter, Maharanisahib Kota, and wife to Ummedsinhji of Kota, with her ladies in waiting in the zenana, c.1890.

buildings have been retrofitted at the very least. Research in established photographic repositories throughout the world can be coupled with the more informal but effective strategy of soliciting images of these structures from tourists, which would go towards helping to build an archive of images important to their structural preservation.[78]

In the final analysis, the complex of buildings must in future be able to generate enough income to guarantee its future upkeep, and this would be possible only if it were opened to tourism, in much the manner as Mehrangarh Fort in Jodhpur, Rajasthan, and Golconda Fort near Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh, are. This would prove the Darbargarh's practical redemption, for its administrators may not have the resources to restore and maintain its buildings. One option may be to propose a public-private partnership in the complex's management, where its owners earn an income from renting the premises to an autonomous tourism agency appointed by the State Government of Gujarat. Another option may be to convert part or all of the Darbargarh complex into a "heritage hotel", a concept which has caught on successfully in Rajasthan, and which again could earn the Darbargarh's owners a revenue necessary to maintaining this large complex of buildings.

Left: "Photograph of Prag Mahal, designed by Colonel Henry St. Clair Wilkins (1828-1896), a Royal Engineer. A clock tower 150 feet high was connected to the main building by covered galleries. This is a view looking across a tank and gardens in the foreground towards the rear elevation of the palace and the clock tower beyond." By permission of The British Library, London.

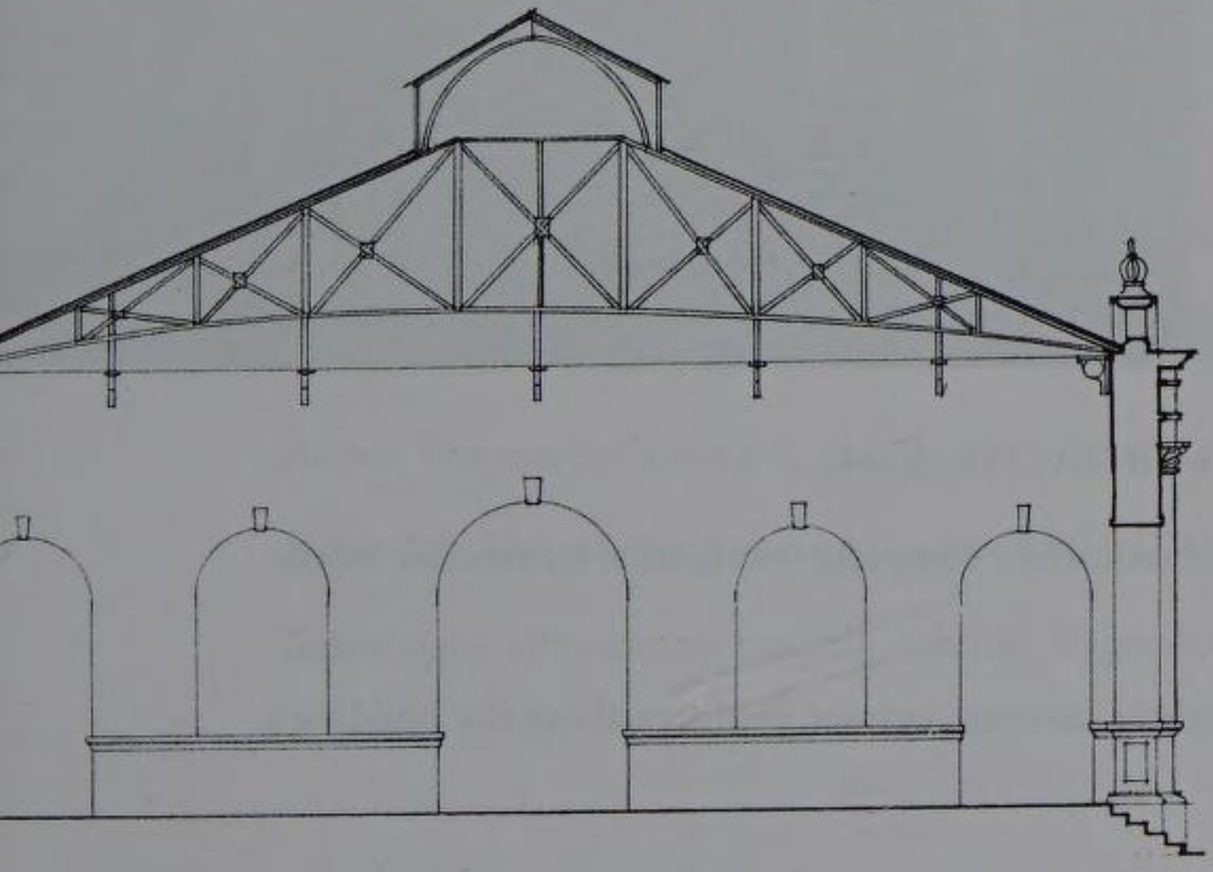
Below: Apartments adjacent to Khengarji III's 19th-century *kacheri*, photographed a few months after the 2001 earthquake.

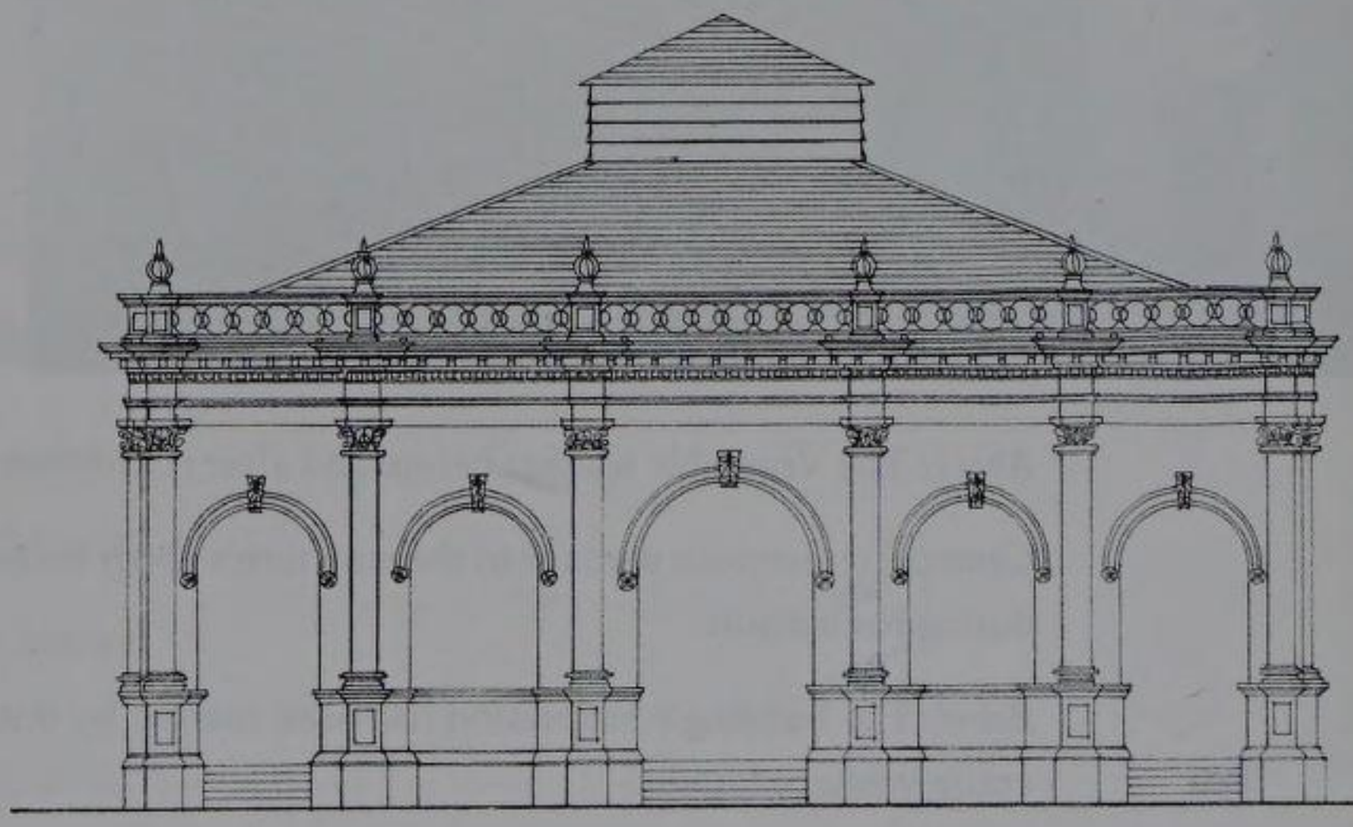
2. The Old Vegetable Market, Saraf Bazaar

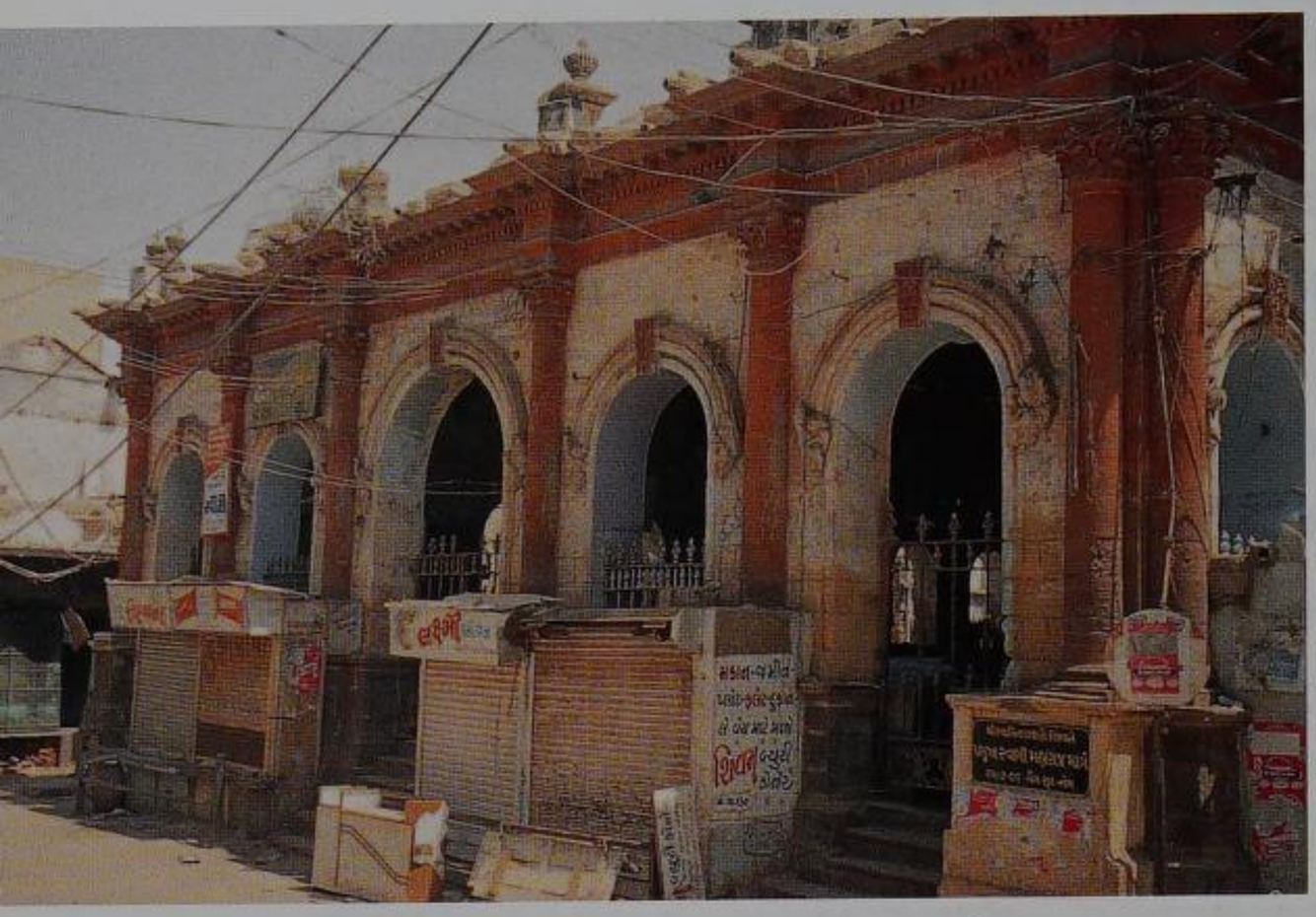
Commissioned by Maharao Pragmalji II in the late 19th century, the building was constructed most probably by *salaat* builders from Bhuj; its architect is difficult to ascertain. The Market building is at the heart of the city, nestled against two intersecting market streets, the Saraf and Danda bazaars. Built in the early 1870s, approximately a decade after the Prag Mahal's construction, the Vegetable Market was built in a vernacular variant of the Neo-classical colonial style, with a simple hipped roof framed by elaborate balusters and supported by continuous arcading on all four sides. The Market building suffered some damage to its roof in the earthquake, although the wrought iron trussing which supports it is almost completely intact. The Market has housed vegetable sellers for most of the 20th century, and has witnessed several royal processional marches. An organization in Ahmedabad, Conservation Research on Urban Traditional Architecture (CRUTA), assessed the building's structural problems and prepared a portfolio of measured drawings of its structure in order to propose very basic retrofitting measures, with funding from USAID's Financial Institutions Reform Expansion (FIRE) Program, in association with the Environmental Planning Collaborative (EPC). Conservation work on the building was done in 2004 under the direction of the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH), and it is hoped that the building will house vegetable sellers and accommodate alternative uses to be truly publicly accessible. Interpreting the building as a municipal resource in which to house public activities will expand its basic function as a vegetable market, for which a flexible annual programme can in future be charted by Bhuj Municipality.

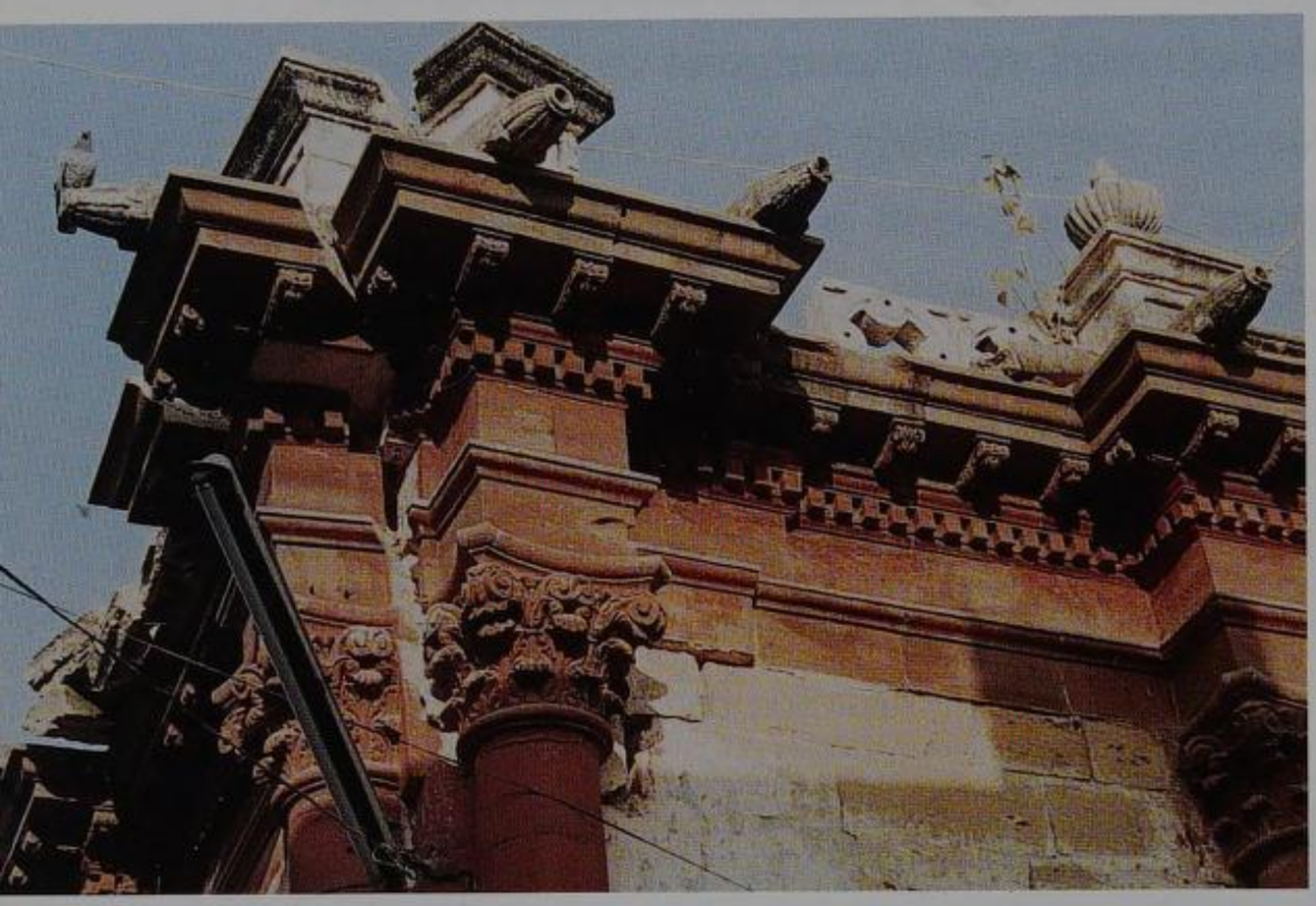
Is it possible to successfully adapt the Vegetable Market in such manner that it accommodates many more uses than at present, becoming a publicly accessible cultural magnet that could generate an income to sustain the building's upkeep and earn Bhuj Municipality long-term revenue?

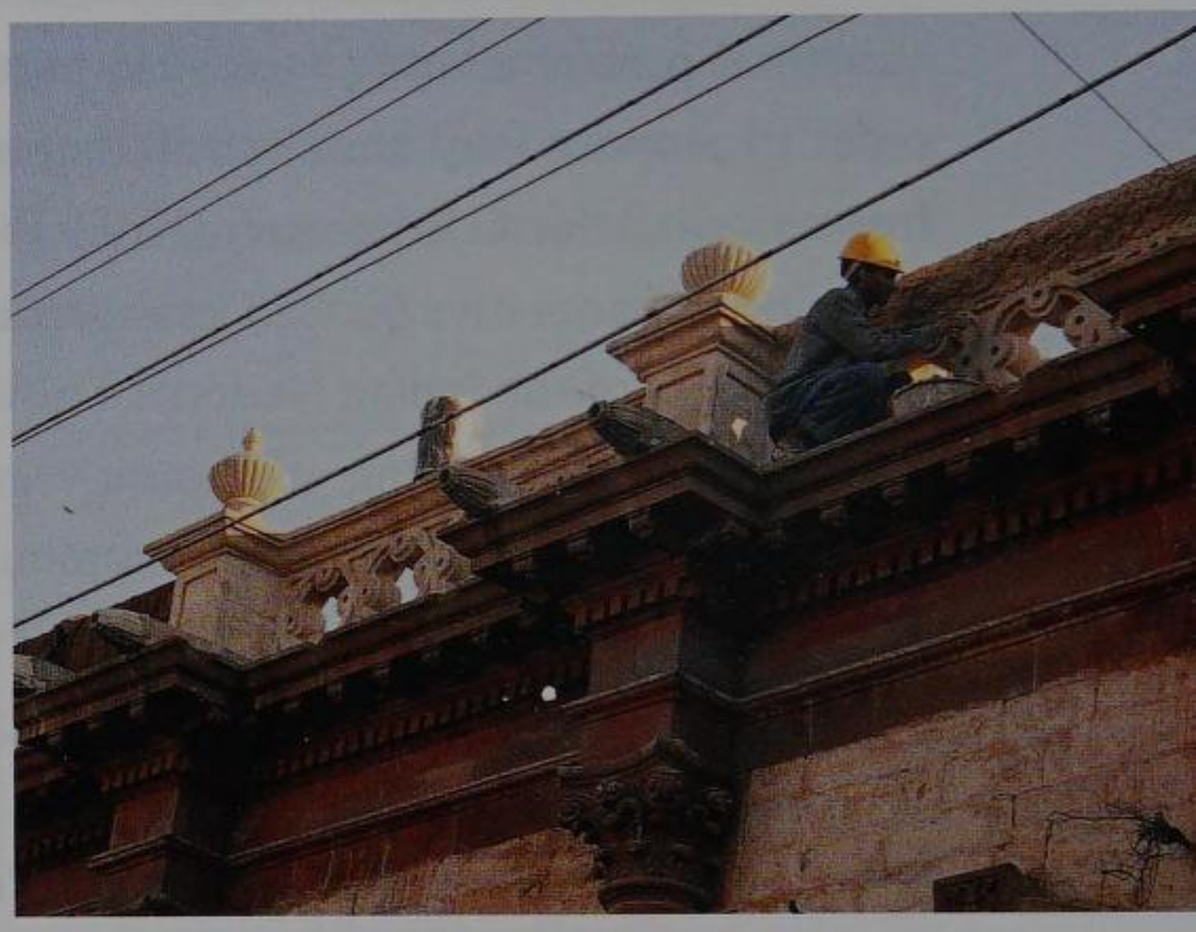
Elevation and section, Vegetable Market, Bhuj. The building was built c. 1885.

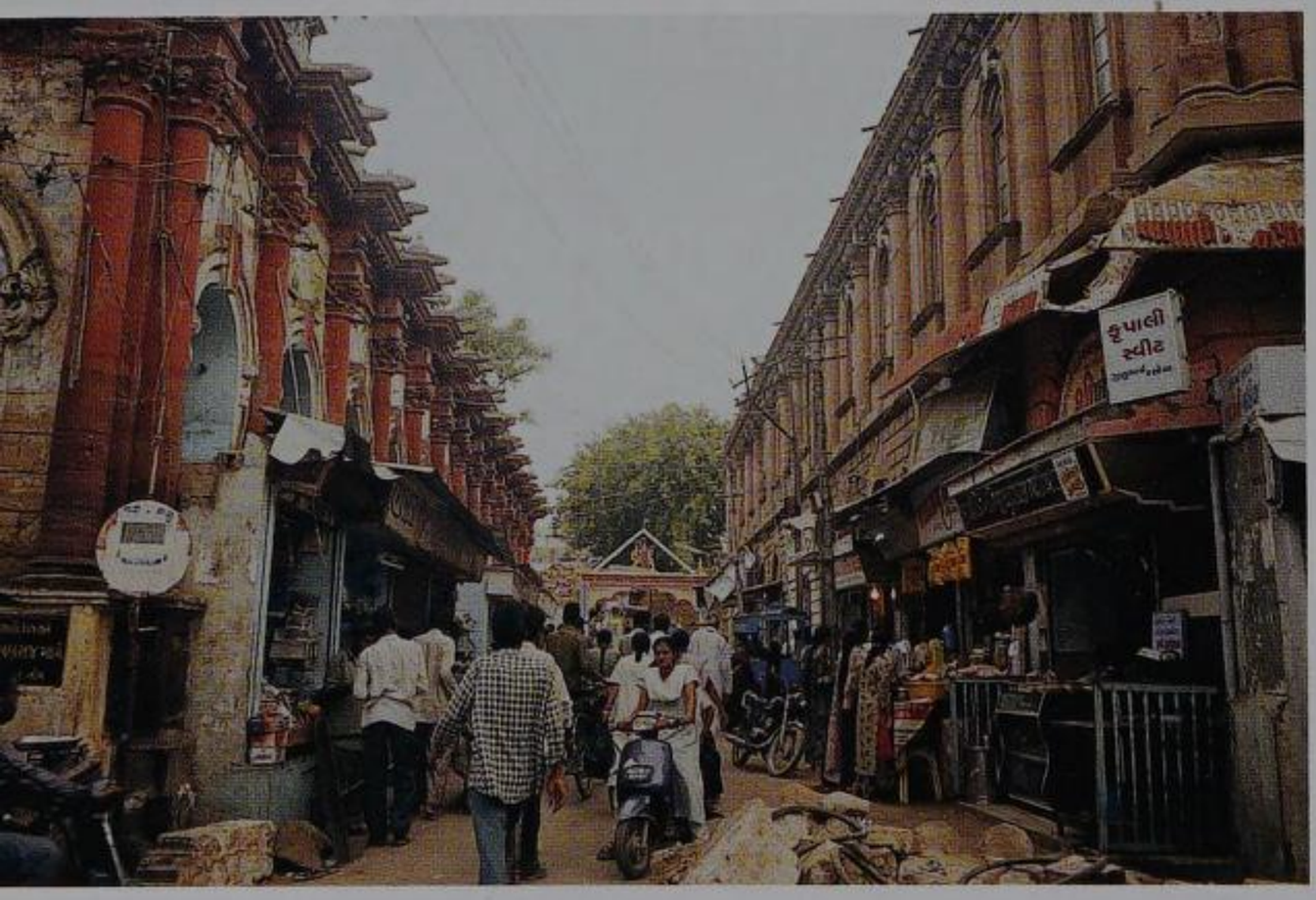


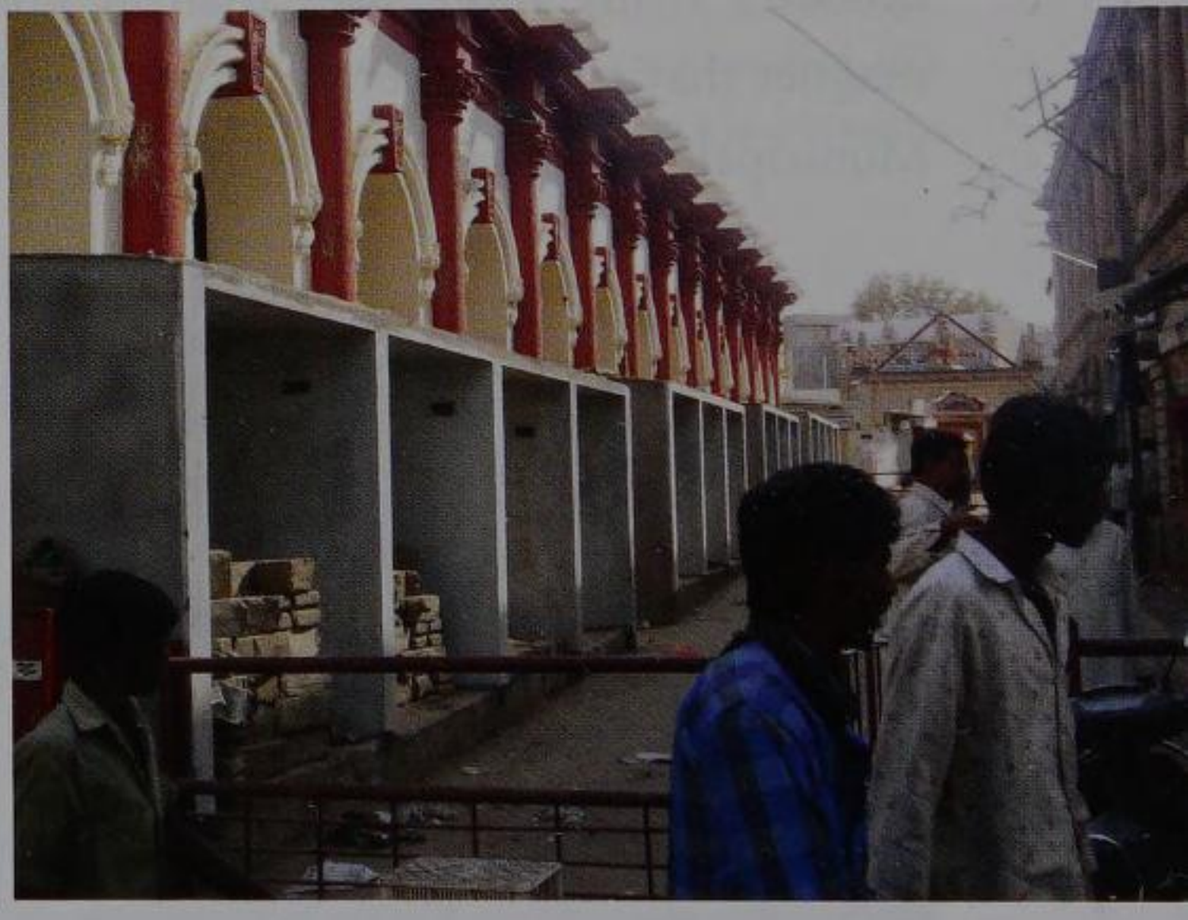








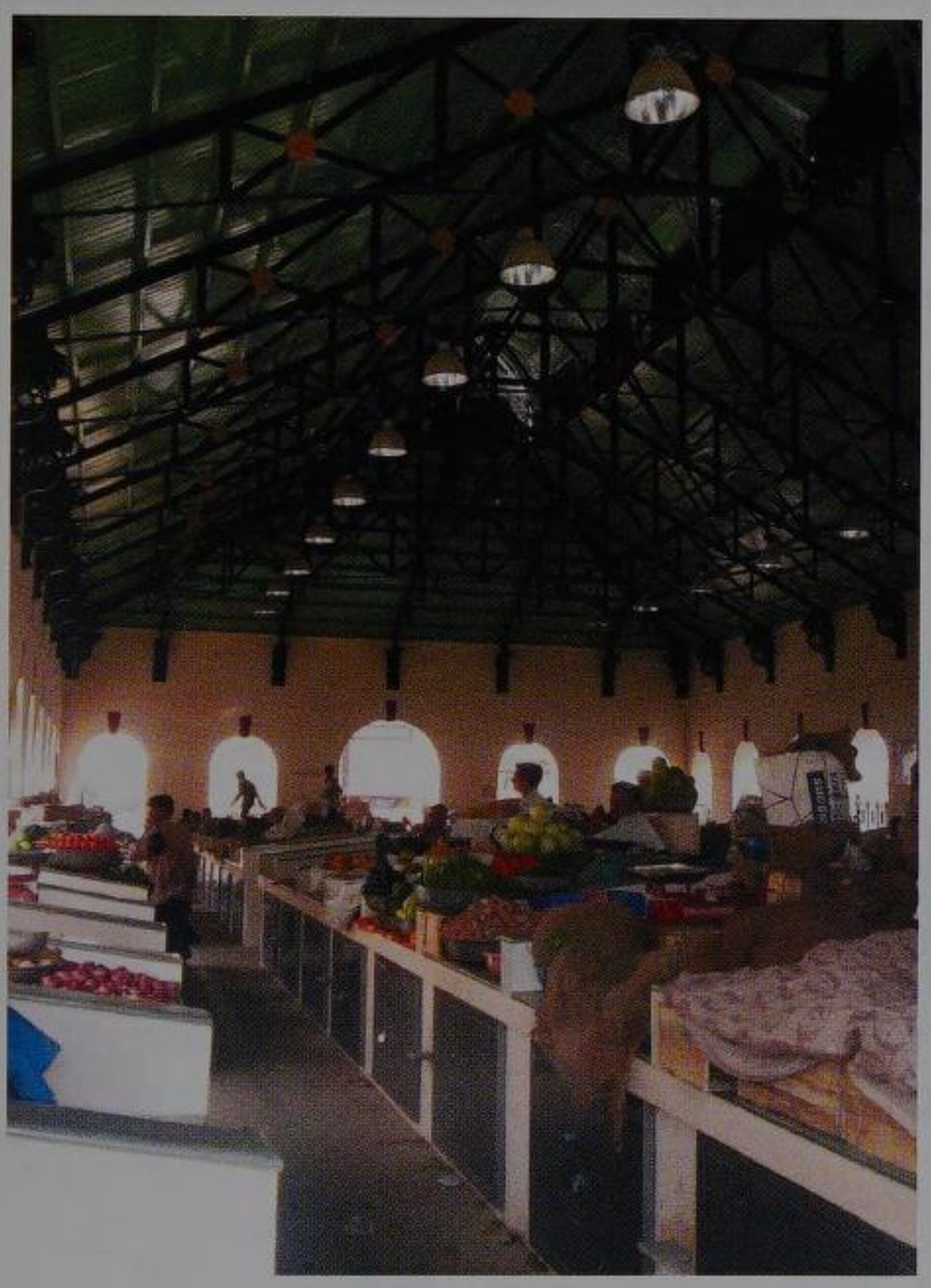


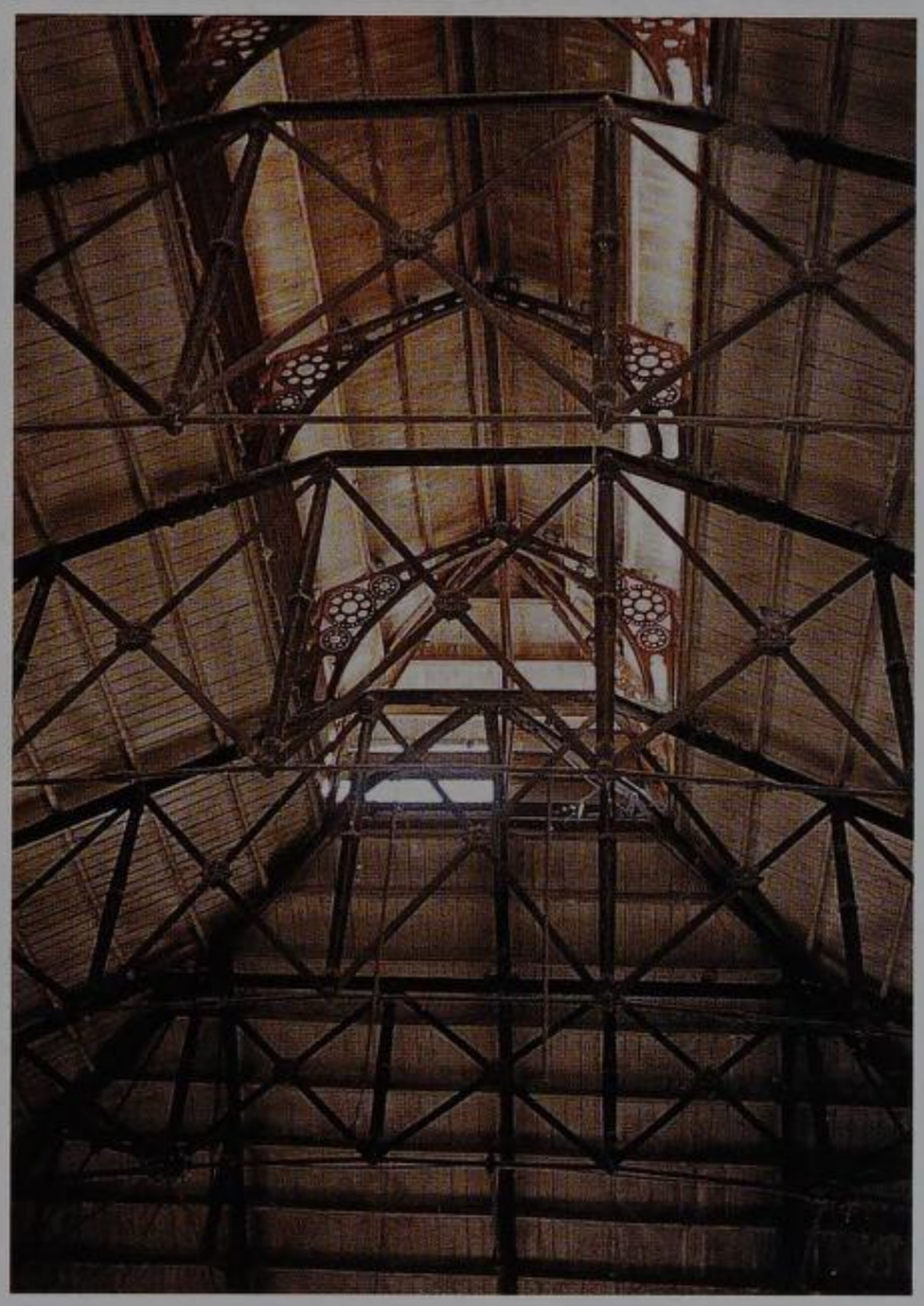


Above: The Vegetable Market before and after restoration by INTACH in 2004.

Centre: Tremendous damage to the structure's upper section required a complete overhaul of its exterior facade during restoration.

Below: The building's restoration has been marred by unsightly concrete storage facilities along the building's entire western facade.





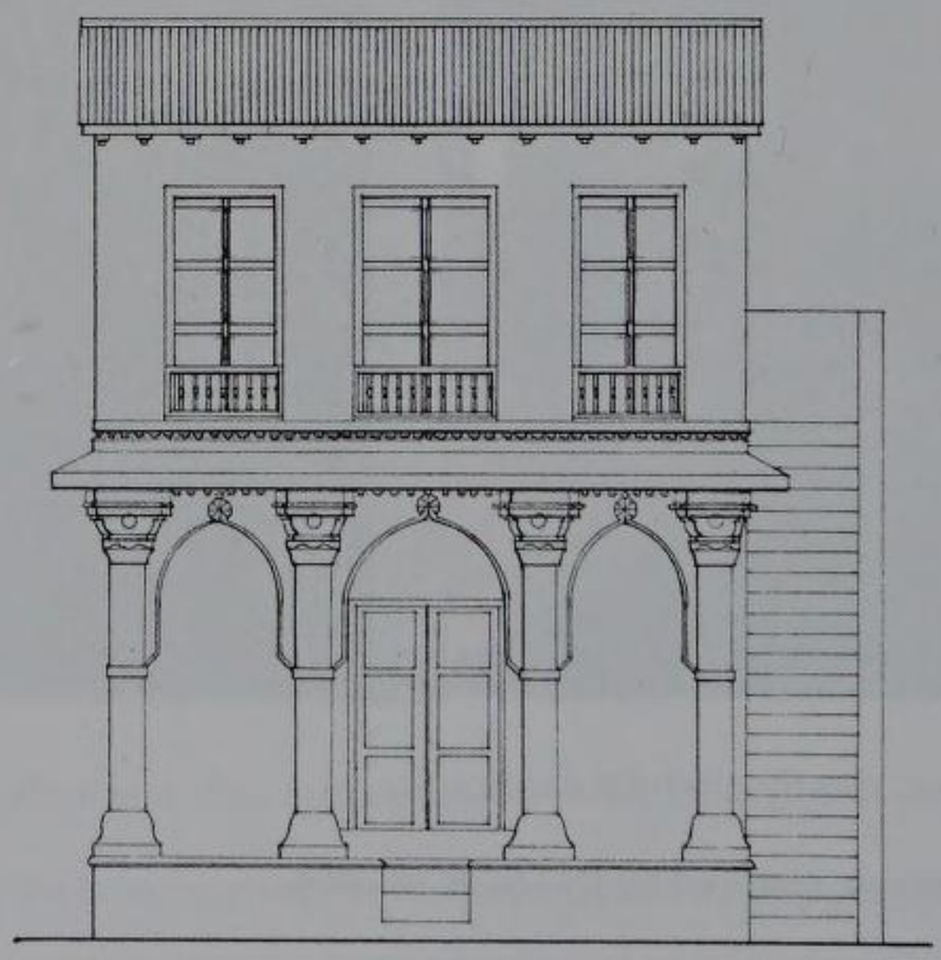
Above: The market's interior, shortly after the earthquake.

Below left: The market's interior, restored by INTACH in 2004.

Below right: 19th-century trussing, interior, Vegetable Market.

3. The *chavdi*, Saraf Bazaar

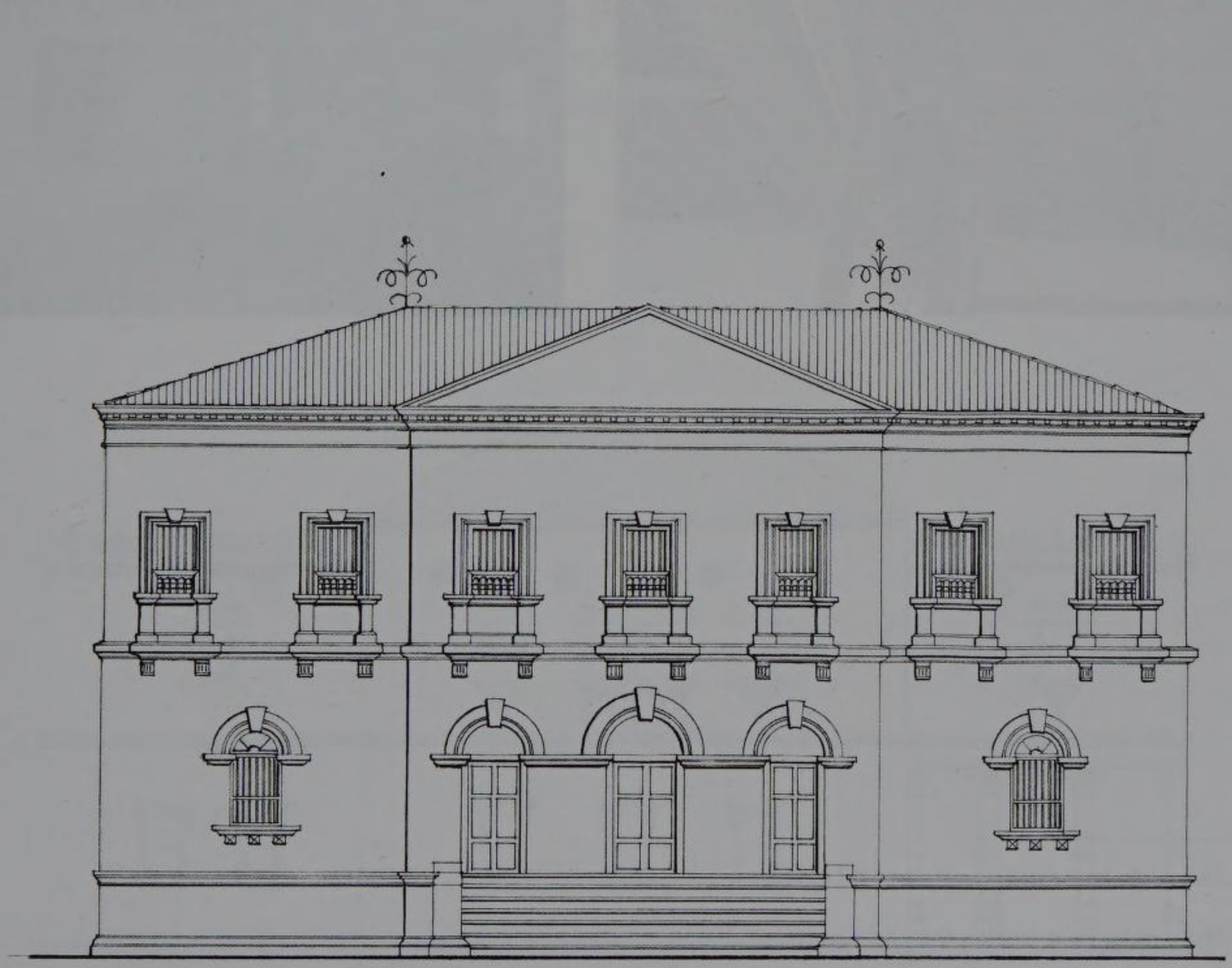
This quaint one-storey Kachchhi building is considered to be the oldest police station in the region. It was built in a vernacular Kachchhi idiom common to many prominent buildings of the mid-18th century; its architect is unknown. A plaque (removed after the earthquake and stored in the Kutch Museum) graced the entrance to a single inner room on the ground floor, narrating Maharao Lakhpatji's 1752 proclamation which bestowed his subjects a litany of rights. Located exactly at the crossing between two major processional streets opposite the vegetable market, the first-floor windows of the *chavdi* afforded the early 20th-century photographer the unique advantage of a perspective view down either street, making the building's second floor windows a favourite vantage point from which to record Nagpanchmi royal *sawaari* marches. Cumbersome cameras requiring glass plates were positioned strategically at the window to give the photographer time to take multiple exposures, and to record the procession's entire train as it made its way down to Bhid Gate and back. The *chavdi*'s ground floor is still in use as a police station, although it remains in disrepair and can be restored. The first-floor room could be used as a photographic museum commemorating the *sawaari* and describing the history of the town's centre, or critiquing the city's growth over the centuries.



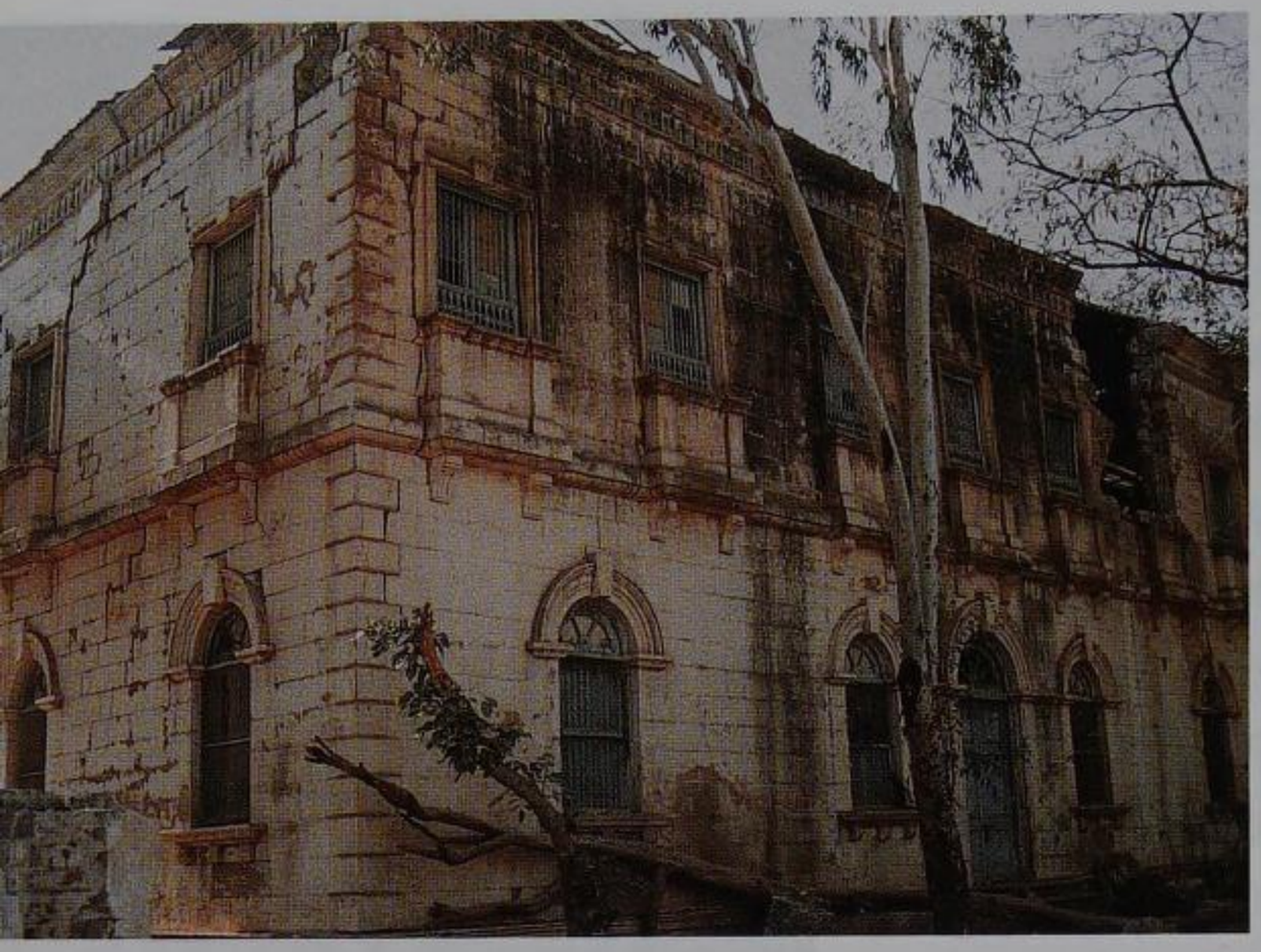
Drawing, elevation, the Police Chavdi. The structure was built possibly in the mid-18th century, and housed a proclamation by Lakhpatji to his people.

4. The Old Court, Patwadi

Built in the late 19th century, the Old Court is the first of several historic buildings one will encounter on a walk towards Patwadi Gate from the centre of the city. It was once the office of the Diwan of Kutch up until the State's merger with India in 1948. Modestly proportioned, the building was part of a cluster of three similar structures, of which two collapsed in the earthquake. A two-storey south-facing structure, it is a distant cousin to the Alfred High School and Sharad Bagh Palace, interpreted in the Neo-classical vernacular style. The surviving building is extremely badly damaged, and requires urgent conservation and adaptive use. A preliminary set of measured drawings, prepared by CRUTA Ahmedabad, exists for the building, but these propose only retrofitting measures. The building remains in a state of disrepair and its restoration is possible; it could be adapted for use as a kindergarten, senior citizen centre, or cultural library to augment the collections already in Bhuj's Vijayarajji Library.



Drawing, elevation, the Old Court.



Above left: East-facing wall, the Old Court.

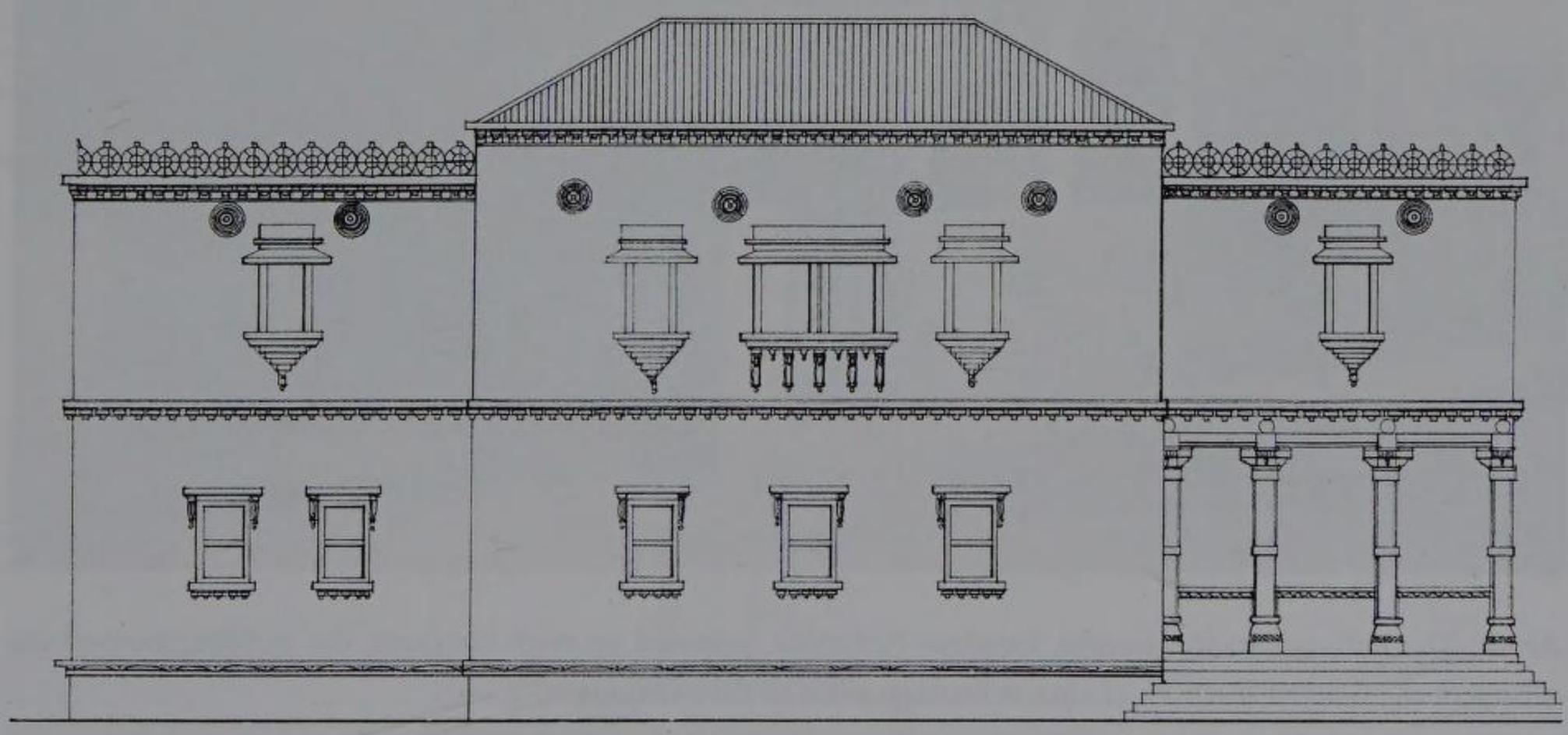
Above right: Rear facade, the Old Court.

Below left: Ceiling on first floor of the Old Court, a recent addition.

Below right: Most of the Old Court's rooms were badly affected by the earthquake.

5. The Naniba Sanskrut Pathshala, Patwadi

This publicly administered building is significant both in terms of its history and its current status. A late–19th century one-storey structure made of red sandstone, the Naniba Sanskrut Pathshala was commissioned by Khengarji III's queen, affectionately known as Naniba, sometime in the late 19th century, and is an example of the use of high-style Kachchhi architectural ornamentation without any reference to the British colonial. It is the first successful example in Bhuj of the complete restoration and adaptive use of a publicly administered building after the earthquake, and could serve as a model for restoration projects in other earthquake-hit areas. Prior to the earthquake, the building housed government offices on its ground floor and the offices of the Gujarat Institute of Desert Ecology on its first floor; these moved their premises elsewhere after the building's roof caved in and part of its first-floor walls collapsed. The building was subsequently restored by HUDCO, and now houses the temporary offices of the Kutch Museum on its first floor. Architectural documentation of the building is now complete, and it remains to be seen whether the building will remain open to public access in years to come.



Drawing, elevation, Naniba Sanskrut Pathshala.

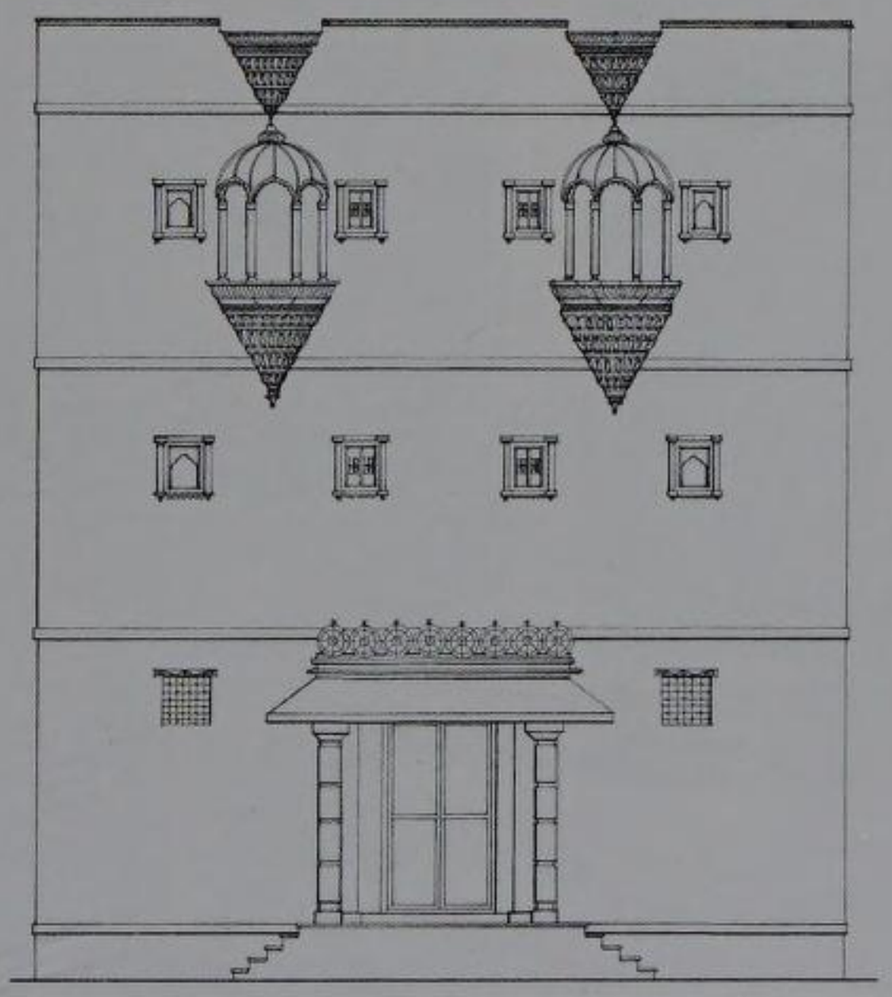
Above: The entrance to the Naniba Sanskrut Pathshala, boarded up with concrete; the building housed the offices of the Gujarat Institute of Desert Ecology prior to the earthquake.

Below: The same entrance in 2004, after the building's restoration by HUDCO. The building now temporarily houses the offices of the Kutch Museum.

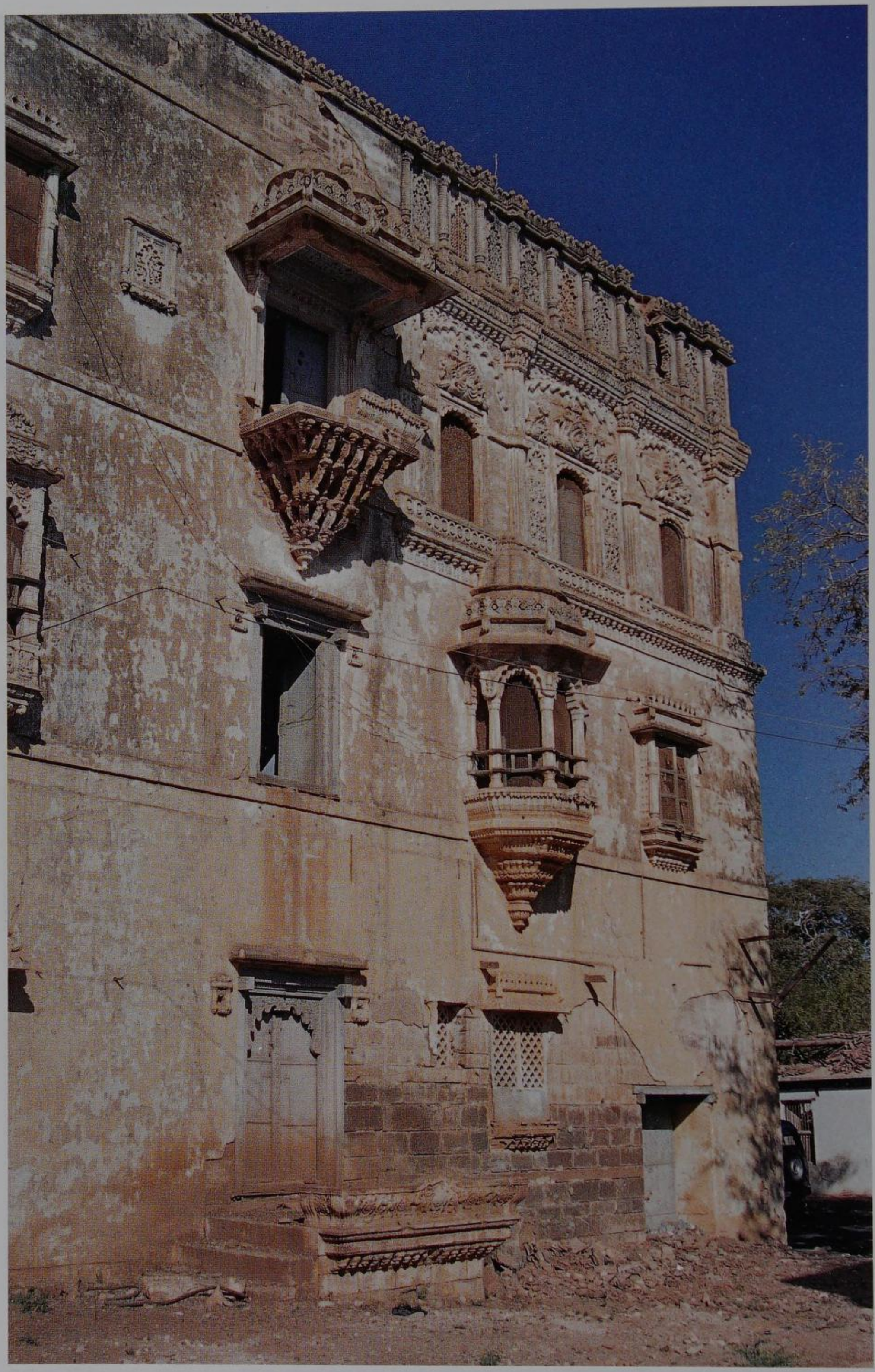
6. Fateh Mohammed's *Khordo*, Patwadi

This imposing two-storey building, flanked by two similarly styled structures of the same vintage, is located next to the Naniba Sanskrut Pathshala. It is a rare example of the Kachchhi Baroque which characterized the mid- to late-18th century architectural boom sponsored by Maharao Lakhpatji. The main building was constructed sometime in the early 19th century to house Jamadar Fateh Mohammed, the distinguished soldier-statesman of Kachchh, and, in the early years after Kachchh's union with India, was used as the offices of the District Collector. A wealth of ornamental detail summarizes all the features common to high-style and vernacular Kachchhi architecture of the period, including ornamental *jharokha*s, the characteristic Kachchhi door complete with *gokhalas*, projecting balconies on the roof, medallions and gargoyles, and fenestration with elaborate lintels and window surrounds. The building is reminiscent of the royal *maholaat* of Mandvi, which has also barely survived. The *khordo*'s interiors are of elaborately carved teakwood, and include quaint doors and fenestration that are rare to see in today's Bhuj.

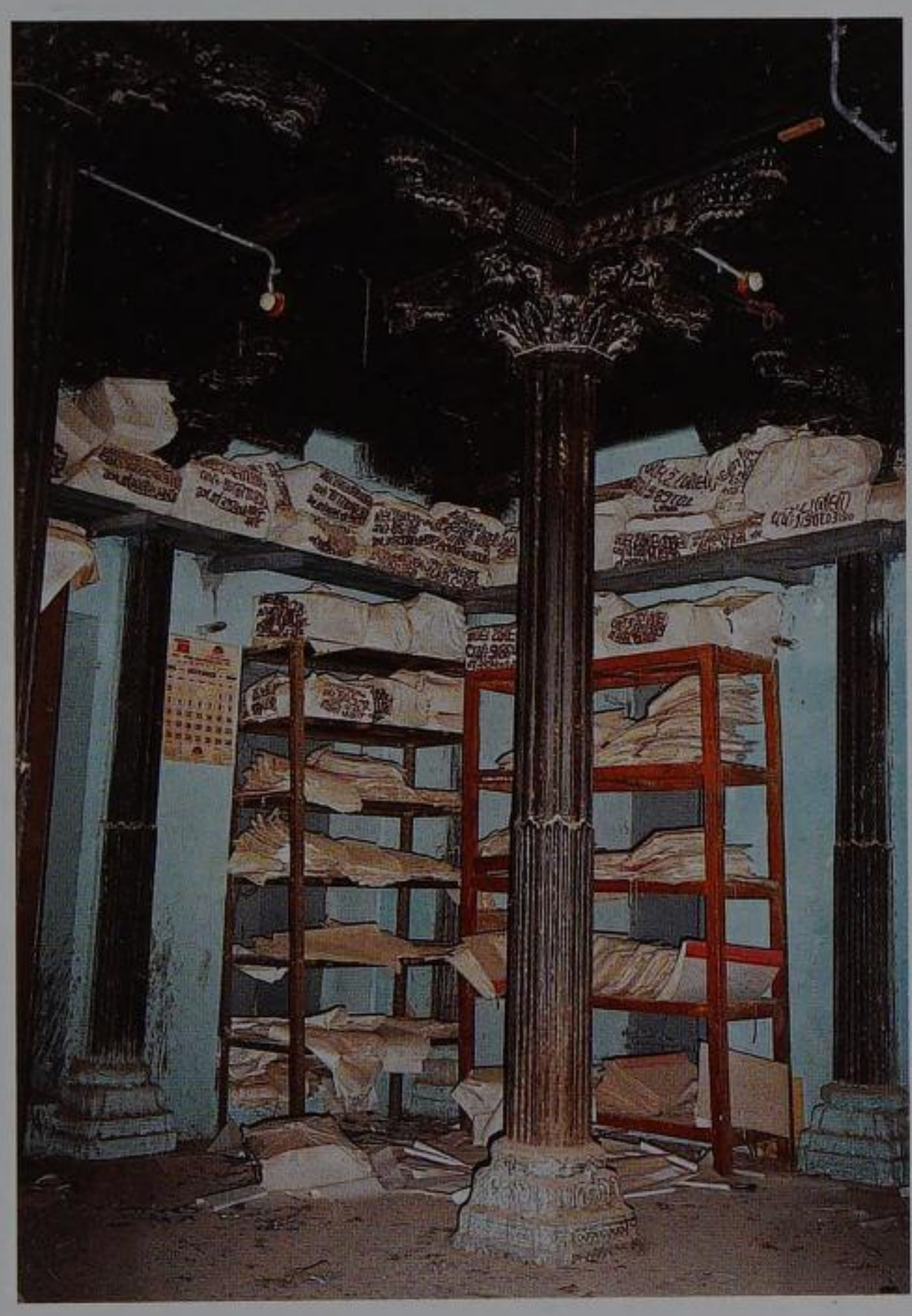
The building withstood the earthquake, partly owing to its walls being fourteen inches thick, although its roof almost collapsed and much of its upper-storey masonry must be replaced. The building can be put to imaginative use; it has tremendous potential as a venue for Kachchhi craft exhibitions, a "living" history museum, a school for drama and music (in keeping with Maharao Lakhpatji's ideals), or office space.



Drawing, elevation, Fateh Mohammed-*no-Khordo*



188 East-facing facade, Fateh Mohammed-*no-Khordo*.



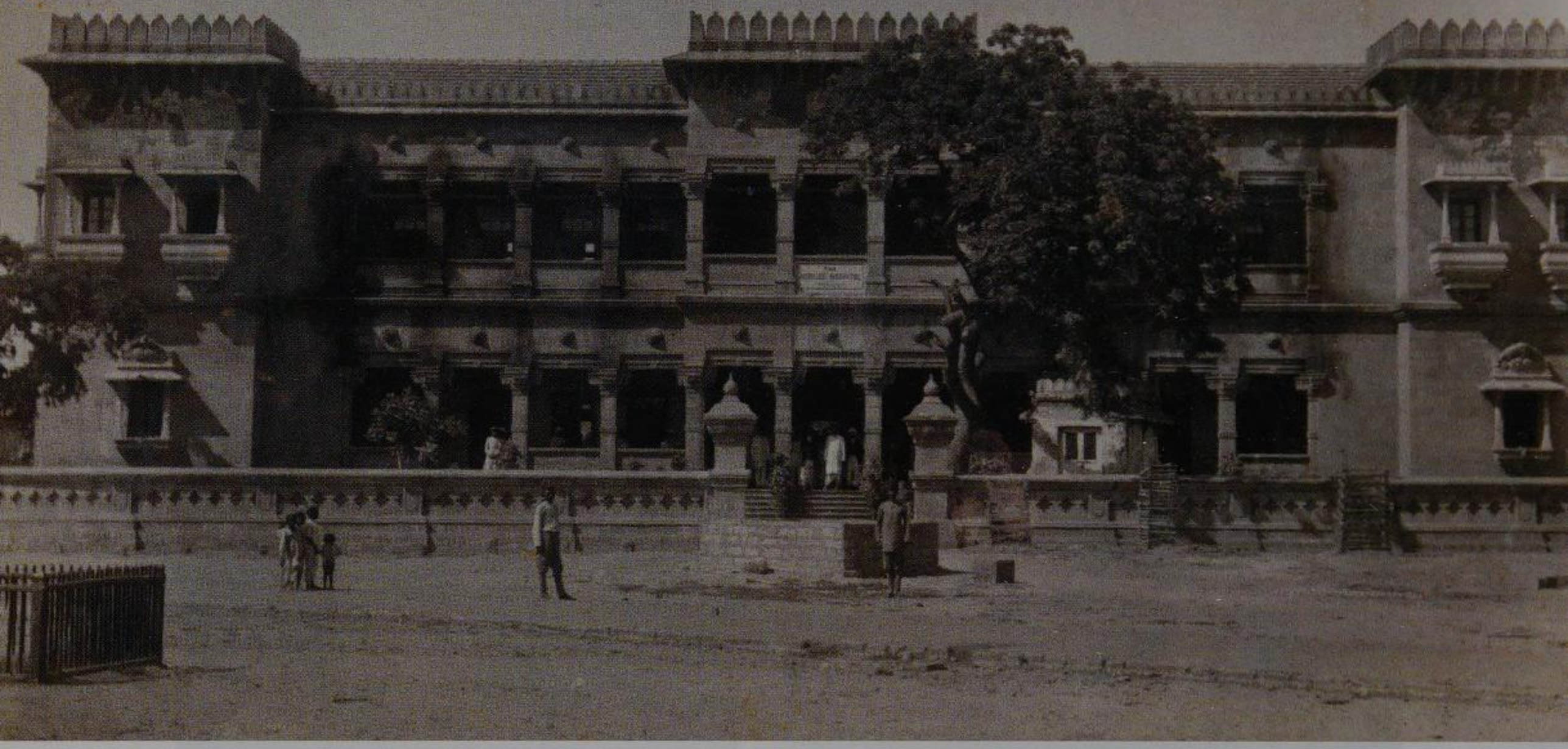
Above: Carved wooden door, possibly mid-18th-century, to an annexe to the Fateh Mohammed-*no-Khordo*, possibly the work of *mistri* and *maniar* woodworkers.

Below left: Exquisitely carved polished teakwood columns on the second floor, Fateh Mohammed-*no-Khordo*. This is perhaps the only completely intact room of its kind remaining in Bhuj.

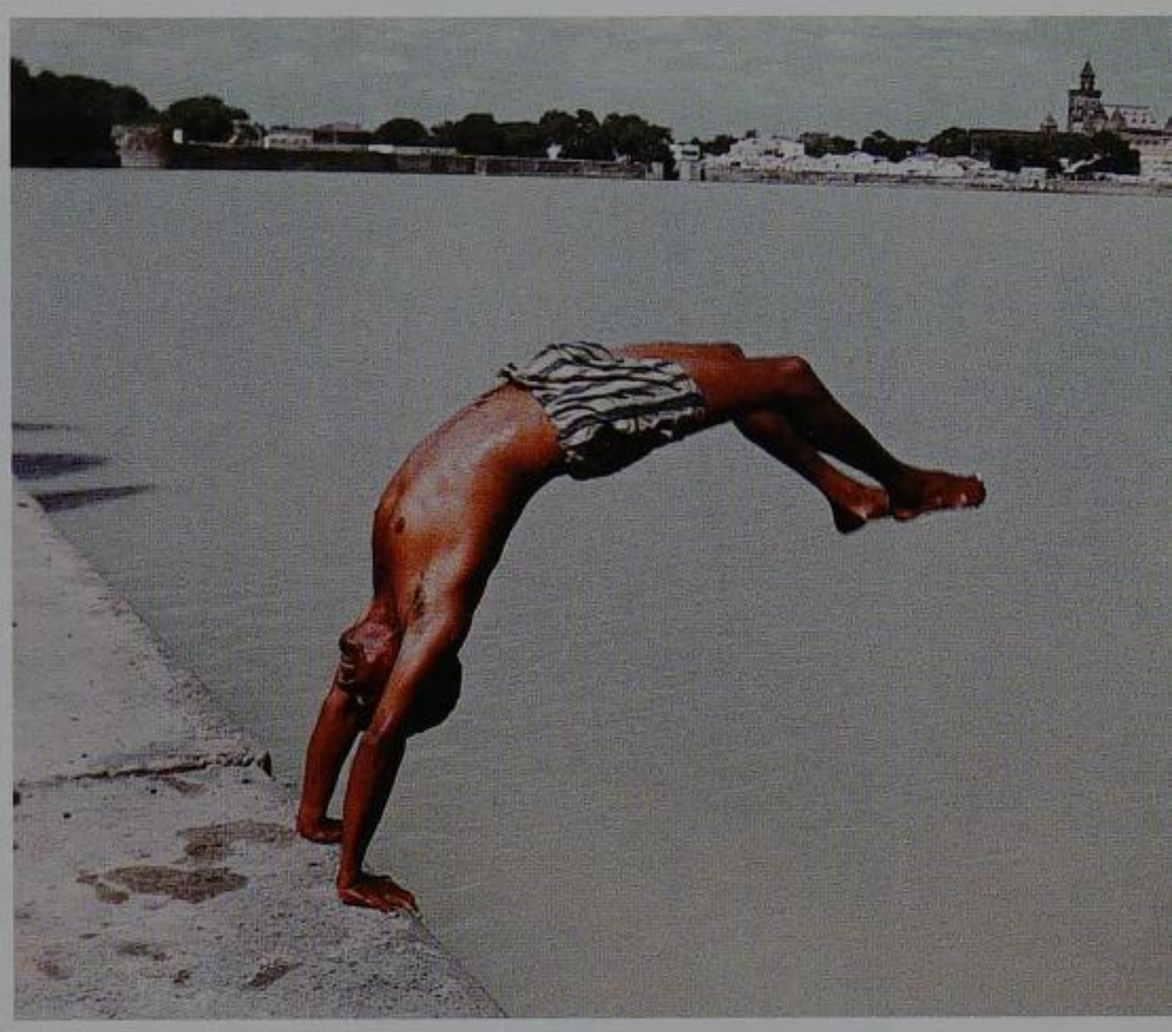
Below right: Door to a room in the Fateh Mohammed-*no-Khordo*, photographed prior to the earthquake.

7. Jubilee Hospital

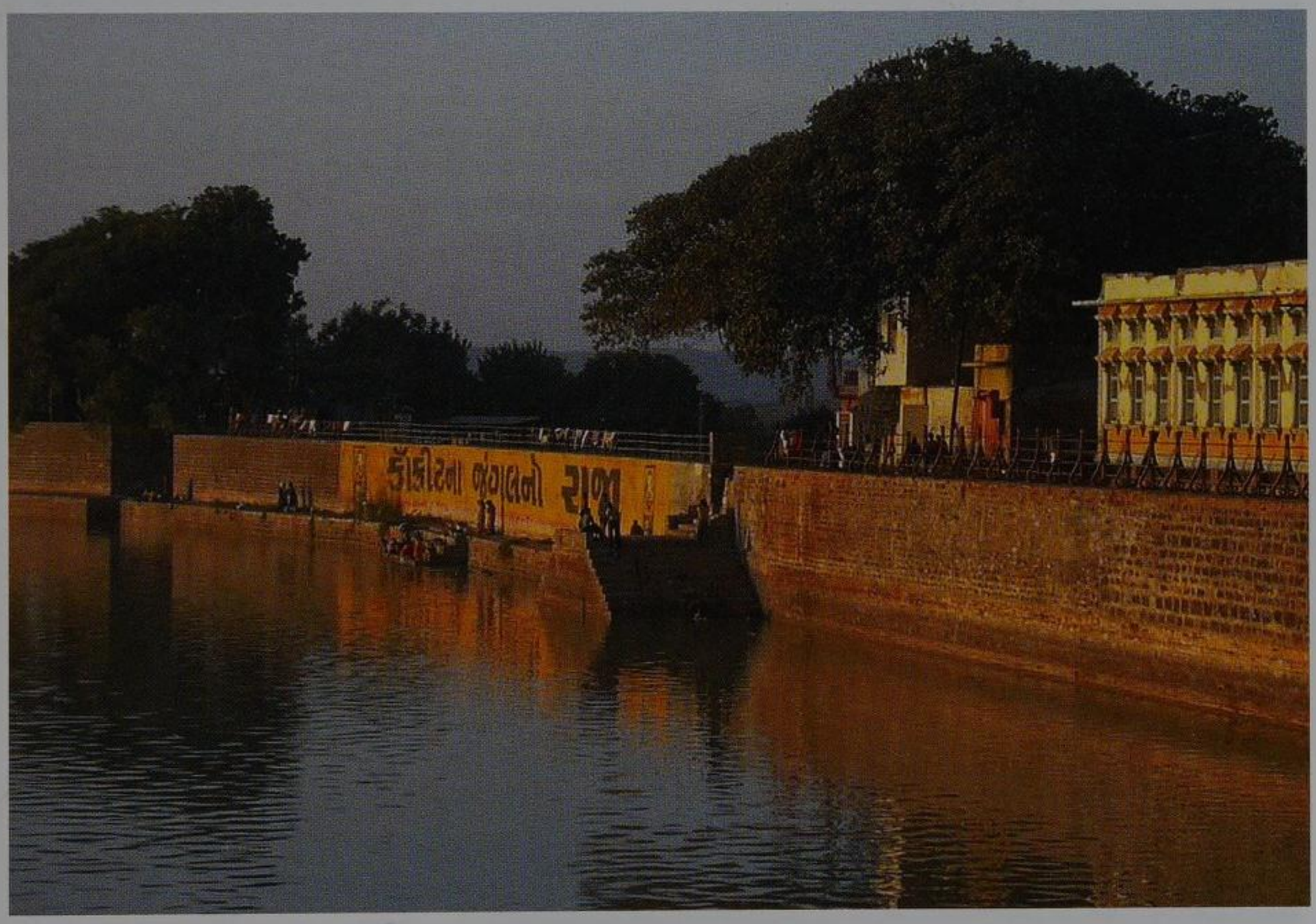
This large, late 19th-century building, located close to the Bhuj Jail and Sarpat Gate, was built to commemorate Queen Victoria's Jubilee celebrations, and is an outstanding example of how the Kachchhi vernacular style of ornamentation and construction can be used in an institutional setting. Its architect is unknown, but it was commissioned by the Kutch State and was most likely built by local *salaat*s. The building suffered immense damage in the 2001 earthquake. Its restoration remains a moot point for lack of funds, and what is left of the building is slowly beginning to disappear as vandals remove stones and nature takes its toll.



8. Pavdi Ghat



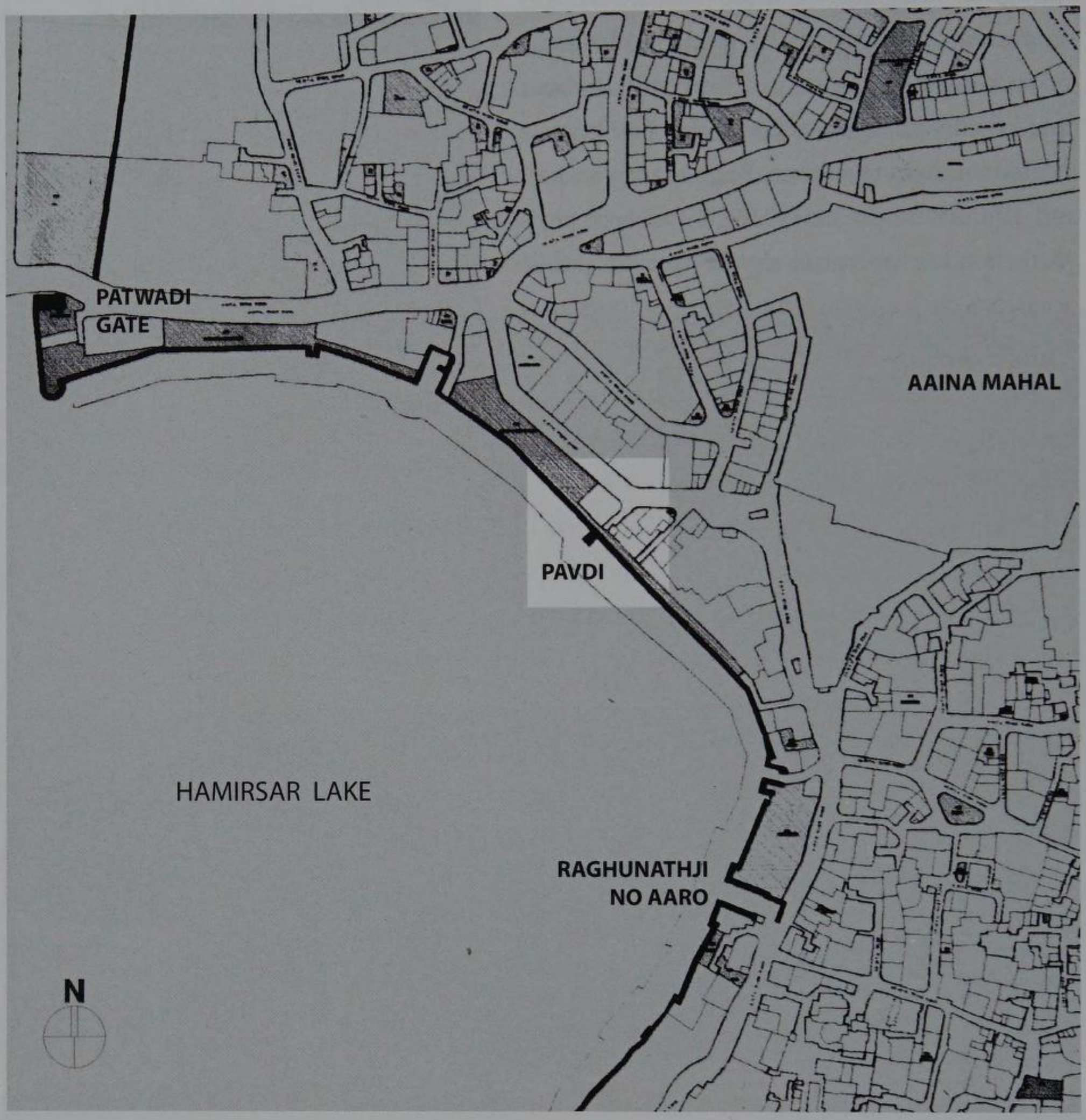
This ghat, with its signature raised platform supported on four sides by stone walls, dates most probably to the early 18th century; an exact date of construction is debatable. The ghat is located midway between Raghunathji-*no-aaro* and Bhoi-*varo-aaro* along the lake, and faces west. It takes on social significance on public occasions such as when the lake overflows after a good spell of rain, celebrated with a ritual diving competition to which thousands have been known to throng (see page 209, above). Elderly residents fondly remember childhoods spent at the water's edge, when the lake was full. The ghat was severely damaged in the earthquake, to the extent that it has had to be dismantled and is now slated for restoration. Restoring the *pavdi* will help to reaffirm the lake's original edge, but the design for it should freshly interpret its contemporary social and architectural significance.



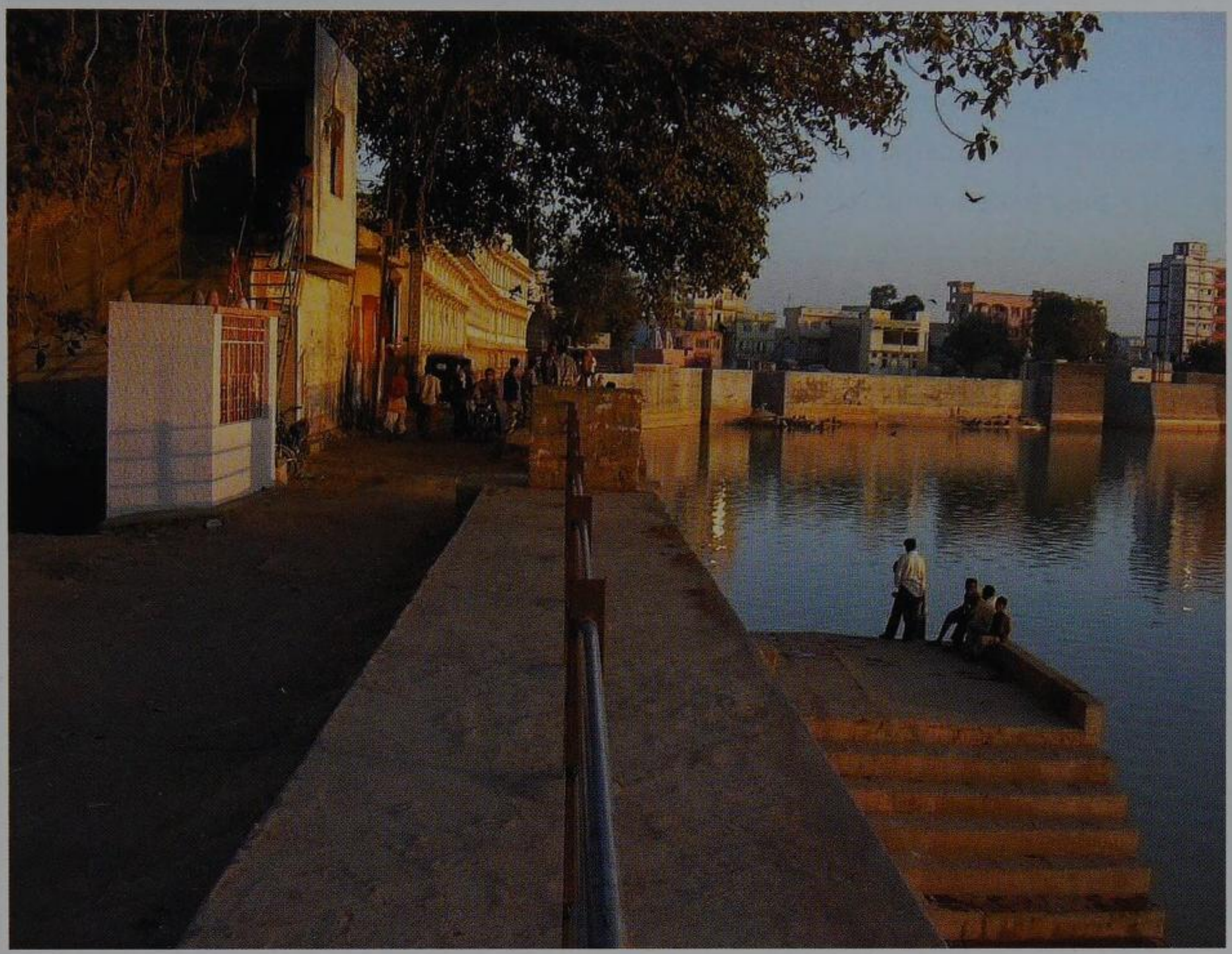
Above: The unrestored ghat.

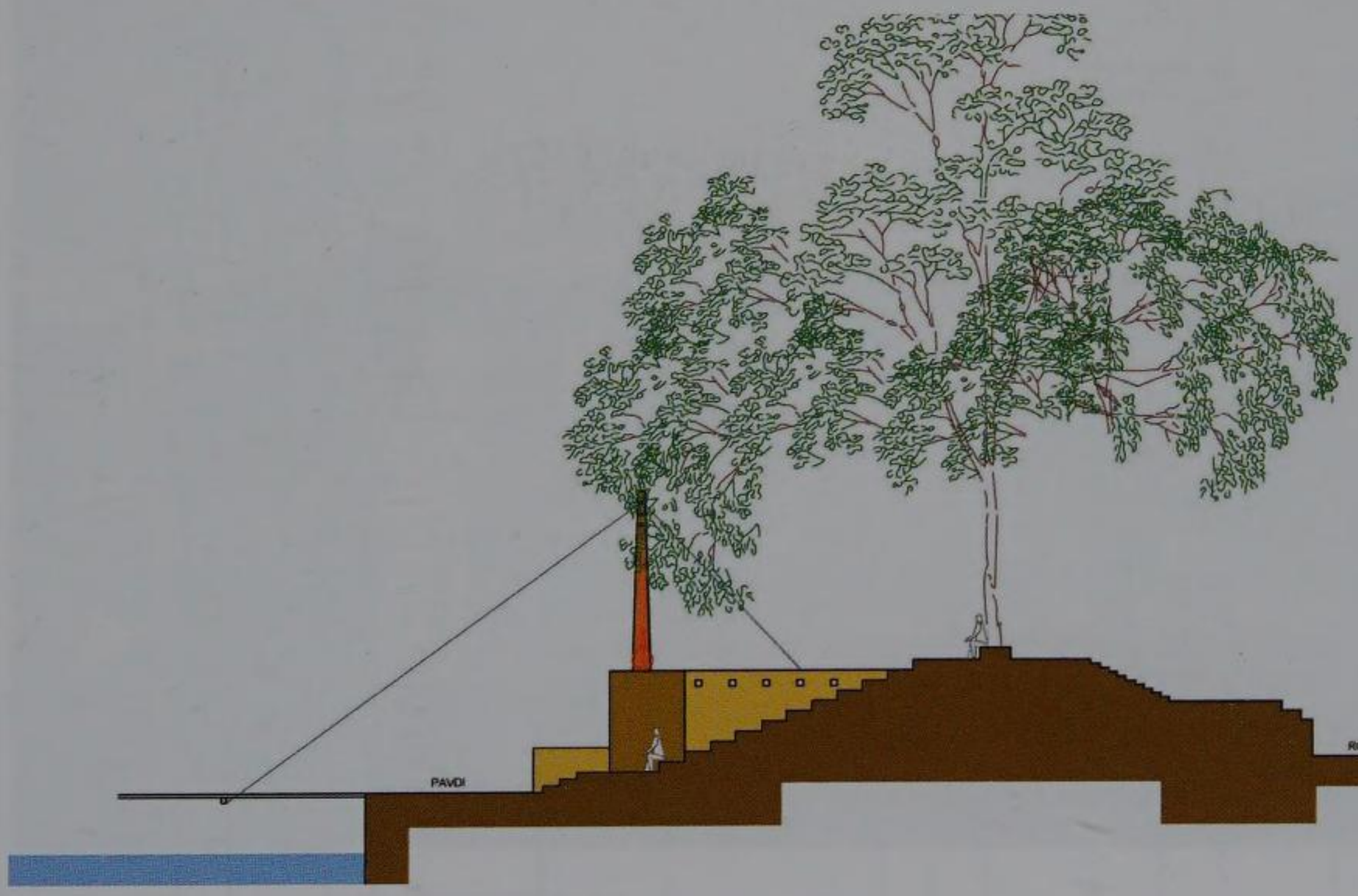
Facing page:
Above: The Jubilee Hospital, photographed c. 1930.

Below: The Jubilee Hospital, photographed after the earthquake.



Above: Location of Pavdi Ghat in relation to Patwadi.



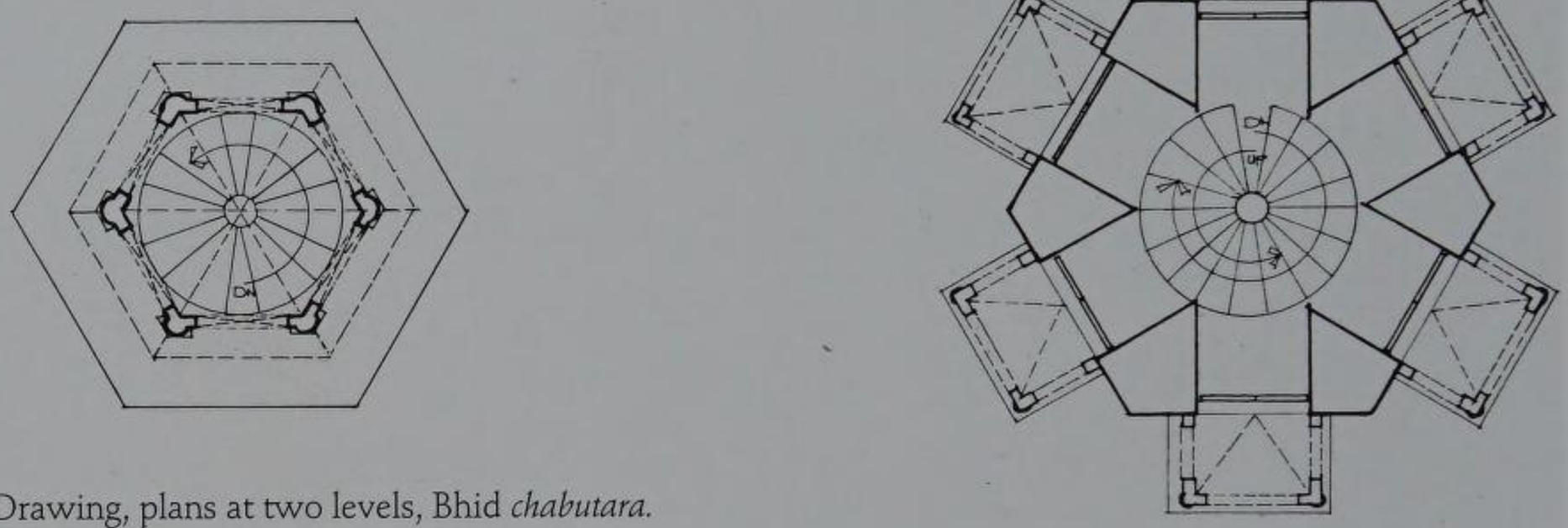


Above: Pavdi Ghat, cleared of rubble, 2003. The ghat is being restored as part of a larger initiative to redesign the Hamirsar's lakefront.

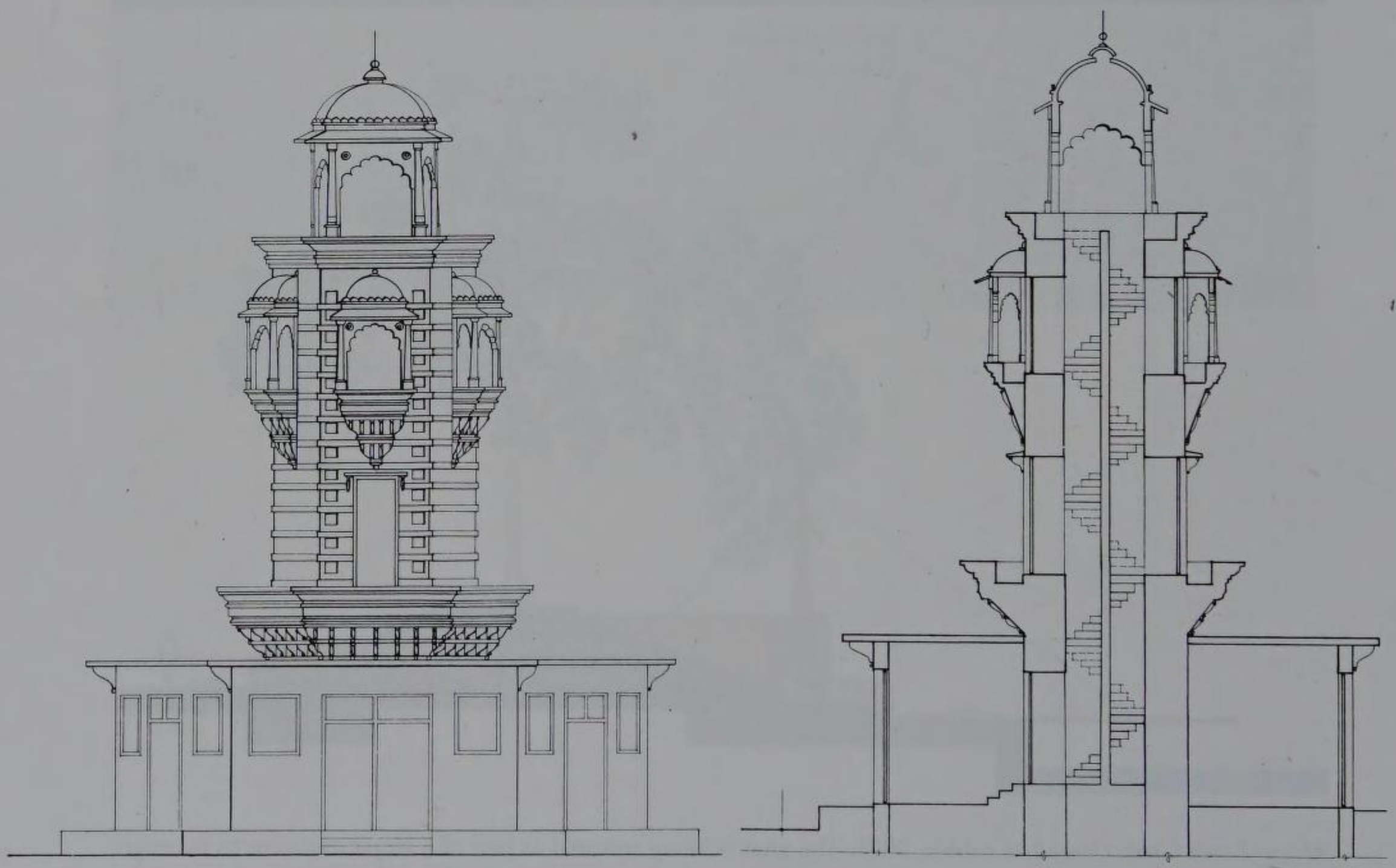
Below: Drawing, section, proposal to redesign Pavdi Ghat as a public arena, 2004.

9. The *chabutara* in Bhid Chowk

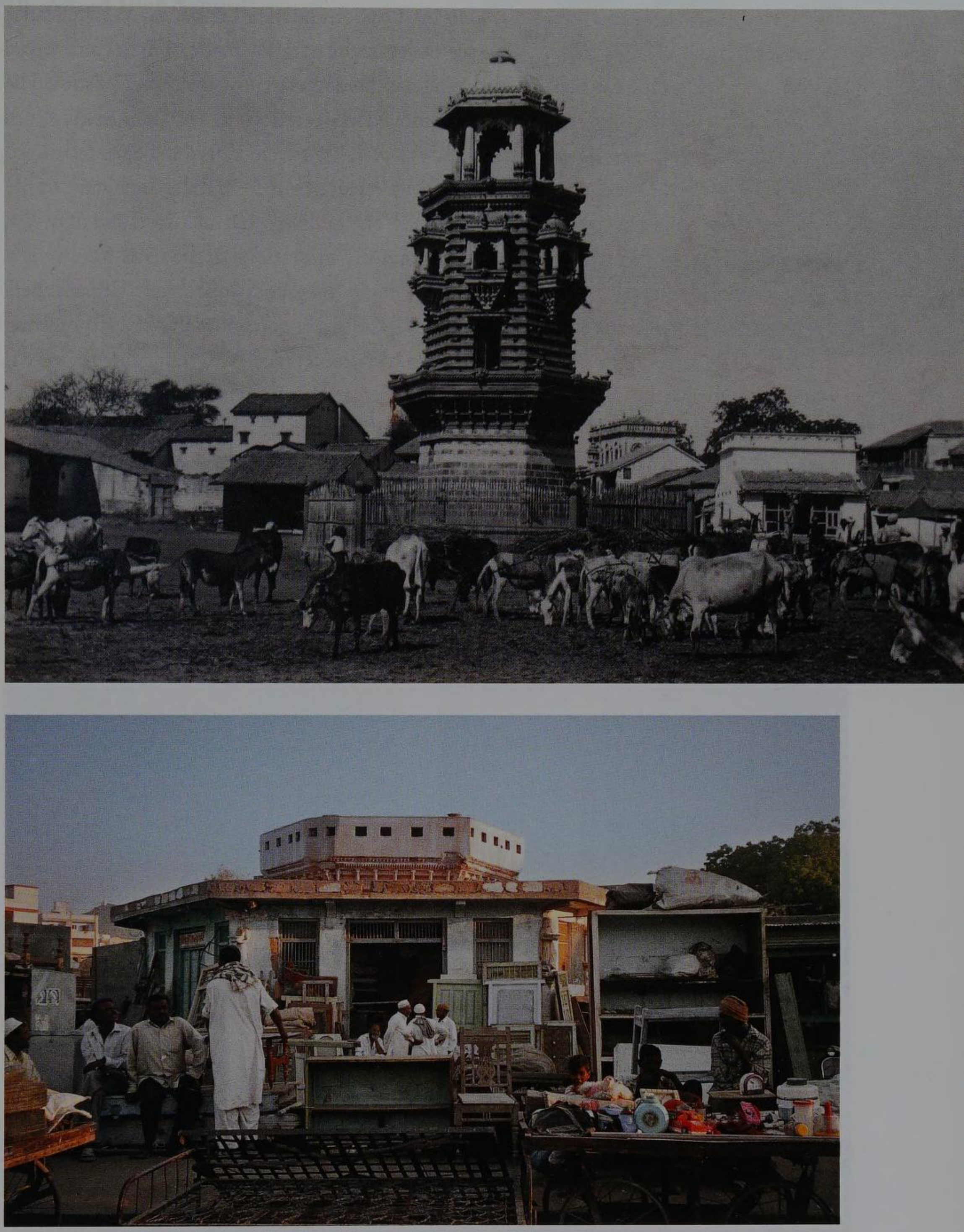
This well-known landmark in Bhuj has been reduced virtually to rubble. Built sometime in the 1890s not far from Bhid Gate, the *chabutara* has accommodated grain markets, shops and businesses around it for well over a century. The octagonally shaped structure was segmented into three parts; the base with its continuous projecting balcony, a middle section punctuated with elaborately decorated projecting *jharokha* windows, and an octagonal dome supported on eight slender fluted columns with delicate capitals. A sign above its main door, which has survived, still salutes the Maharaos of old with the words "*Jiye Ra*", meaning "Long live the King of Kutch." The *chabutara* collapsed almost completely in the earthquake, with only its octagonal base left unscathed.



Above: Drawing, plans at two levels, Bhid *chabutara.*



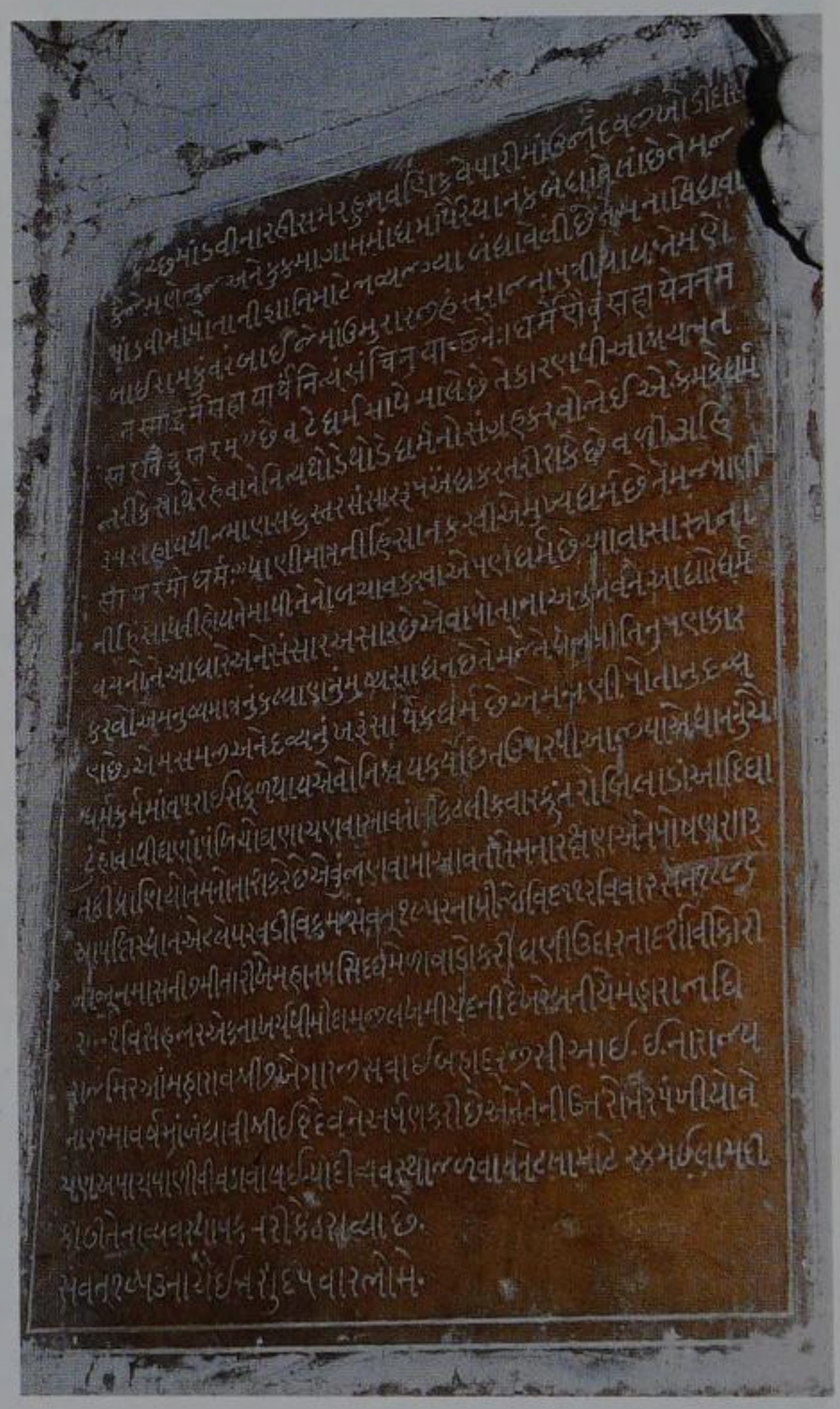
Above: Drawing, elevation and section, Bhid *chabutara.*



Above: The *chabutara* at Bhid, photographed possibly in the 1880s.

Below: While urban design initiatives outlined in the Bhuj Development Plan following the earthquake might have rendered the *chabutara* a visual magnet and preserved its historic character, the structure remains unrestored, and has become the backdrop for formal and informal markets.

Interviews with members of the Bhid Traders' Association underline the *chabutara*'s significance to the local community of traders, who see the structure as emblematic of their commercial resilience even after the earthquake. But opinion is divided as to how the *chabutara* should be restored. If the Bhid Traders' Association has moved its operations to new premises far from Bhid, should energy be spent on restoring the *chabutara*? If it were indeed to be reconstructed, could it be as finely crafted again, or would its replacement look more utilitarian, more modern? How would its restoration be financed? The building was measured and drawn in 2002 by architects using historic photographs and site inspections as the basis from which to conjecture its dimensions. Members of the trade association discussed with planners the possibility of soliciting donations from the local business community toward meeting the costs of its restoration, but have since been too preoccupied with rebuilding their own warehouses to give the *chabutara* serious thought. Perhaps it is now time for civic associations in Bhuj to consider the *chabutara*'s importance as a landmark to be made the focal point in future urban design exercises. Could it become an unusual traffic island in a busy square?



Above left: Entrance into the *chabutara*. A door leads to a spiral staircase.

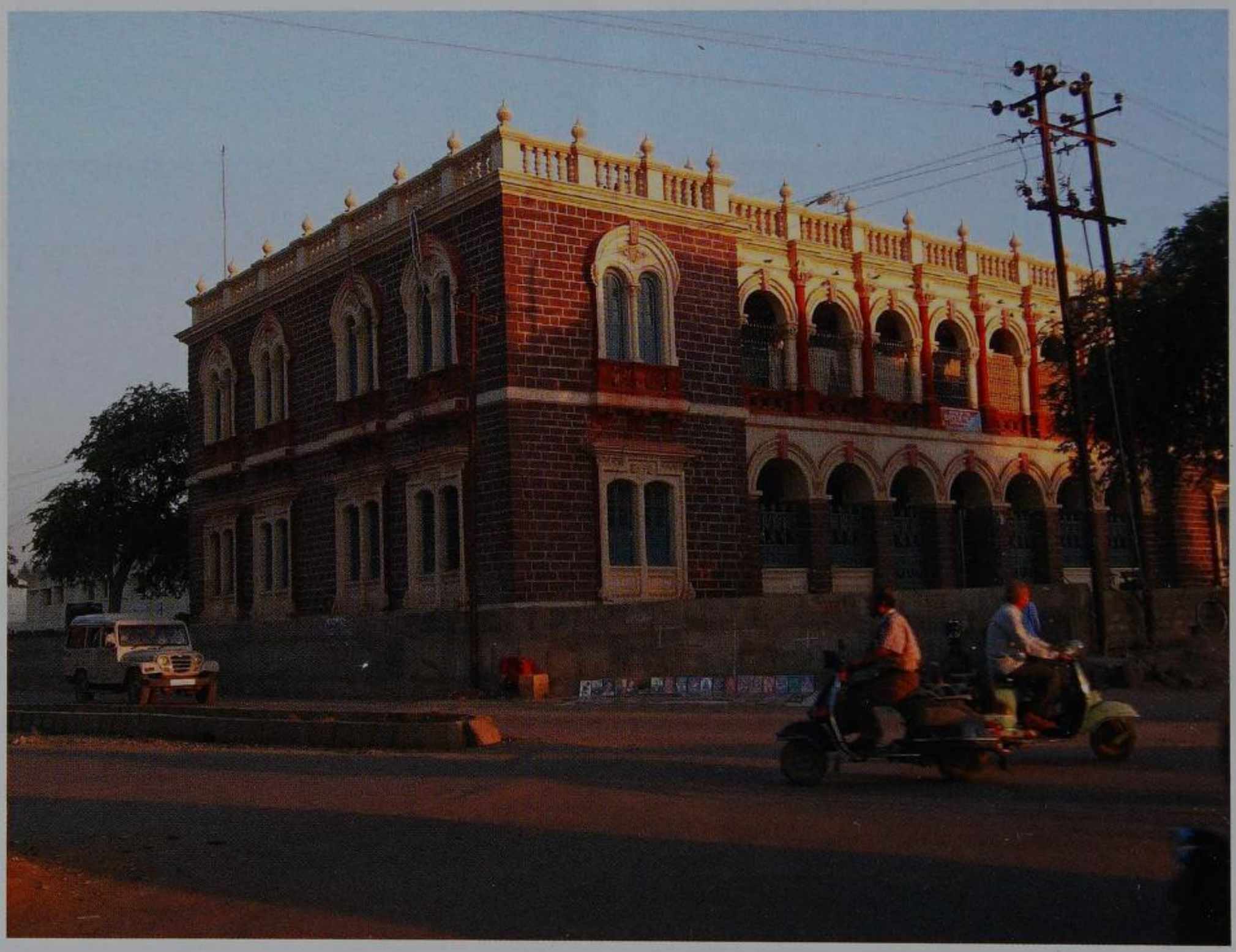
Above right: Inscription recording the Bhid *chabutara*'s benefactor, Devji Khodidas, who financed buildings in Mandvi, Bhuj and Kukma. The tablet records his reason for building the structure, which was to protect birds from predators. The *chabutara* was inaugurated on June 7, 1896, on which occasion he gave away the princely sum of 20,001 rupees under his benefactor Damji Lakhmichand's supervision.

10. Alfred High School

This three-storey building is an instantly recognizable landmark along the Hamirsar's waterfront. The Alfred High School was founded in 1870 in Mandvi, housed first in a building on the seashore where the Mandvi Hospital is now situated. Two years after its commencement, the school was moved close to Patwadi Gate in Bhuj, where there was already a Gujarati School. It came to occupy its present-day building, in 1885.

The school building features recessed arches along its west facade. The building has remained unchanged since its first construction, with the exception of a balustraded roof, added at the turn of the century. Many local luminaries have passed through the school's portals, and it is said that even Maharao Khengarji III took personal interest in its welfare. Elderly residents in Bhuj remember its faculty in the 1930s and 1940s, particularly in 1934 when the school celebrated its Golden Jubilee. The building was restored in 2004, and is a study in the sensitive treatment of a local icon.

Above: The staff of the School and A-V School in 1934, from a commemorative historical archive on the school.



Above: A royal procession moving past the Alfred High School toward the Kalyaneshwar Mahadev Temple, possibly in the late 1890s. Note the two gate posts, which appear in an earlier photograph from the 1870s when the school building had not been built but its property delineated.

Below: The building restored in 2003.

11. The *chhatris* (*chhattedis*) of Bhuj

The royal cenotaphs to the kings of Kutch are spread over a large marshy expanse adjacent to Hamirsar Lake. The largest of them collapsed completely in the earthquake, a sad irony considering that it was one of the least damaged in an earthquake which struck the region in 1819. A few years after that event, Marianna Postans, writing in 1839, talked of how

> ...the centre tomb is least injured. It was erected by Rao Gore in honour of his father, Rao Lacca, in 1760; and as the province of Cutch was at its zenith of wealth and power during the reign of Rao Lacca's father (Daisul) this may account for the erection of so costly and splendid a cenotaph. It is a polygonally shaped building, having two entrances, and a sort of gallery round it; the roof of which is curiously and beautifully carved, and supported by a pillar at every angle. This encloses a small room, in which were originally deposited the royal ashes, and sixteen rude and upright stones daubed with a pigment of red ochre, representing the Rao's wives, who performed suttee at his decease. Report, indeed, affirms that the ladies of the harem substituted slave-girls in their place; but as this is not usually permitted, I should doubt the truth of the assertion. The tomb is decorated by...Ram Sing; but the style of the building is not so essentially Dutch, as those which form the ornaments of his other works. They consist principally of representations of Nâtch, men playing on the siringa, elephants, alligators, and Hunaman, the monkey god.
>
> The beautifully wrought traceries of flowers, which ornament the friezes, mouldings, and capitals of the numerous columns – the variety of subjects introduced to decorate this great monument of labour and ingenuity – seem to defy even a complete observation. During a lengthy residence in its neighbourhood, this tomb has constantly been a subject of curiosity and admiration to me as a work of art; and at every visit, I find renewed cause for surprise at the ingenuity of its architect.[79]

Work by the Archaeological Survey of India on recovering and cataloguing the cenotaphs' stones had already begun a few months after the 2001 earthquake, but the project remains slow for lack of funds, and staff. Funding assistance and technical expertise may be required from several philanthropic agencies, nationally and internationally; a paralled might be found in the international collaboration between several countries in the late 1960s to save Egypt's sculptures of Pharaoh Ramses II at Abu Simbel from being inundated by the Aswan Dam. In the *chhattedis*' instance, the challenge would be to restore, in textbook preservation manner, two or three (if not all) major cenotaphs, and to study the site's carrying capacity to accommodate a large number of people.

Following pages:
Page 200: View of the *chhattedis* of Bhuj, photographed in the 1960s.

Page 201, above: The *chhattedis*, by an unknown photographer in 1877. By permission of The British Library, London.

Page 201, below: Lakhpatji's *chhattedi*, completely destroyed in the 2001 earthquake.

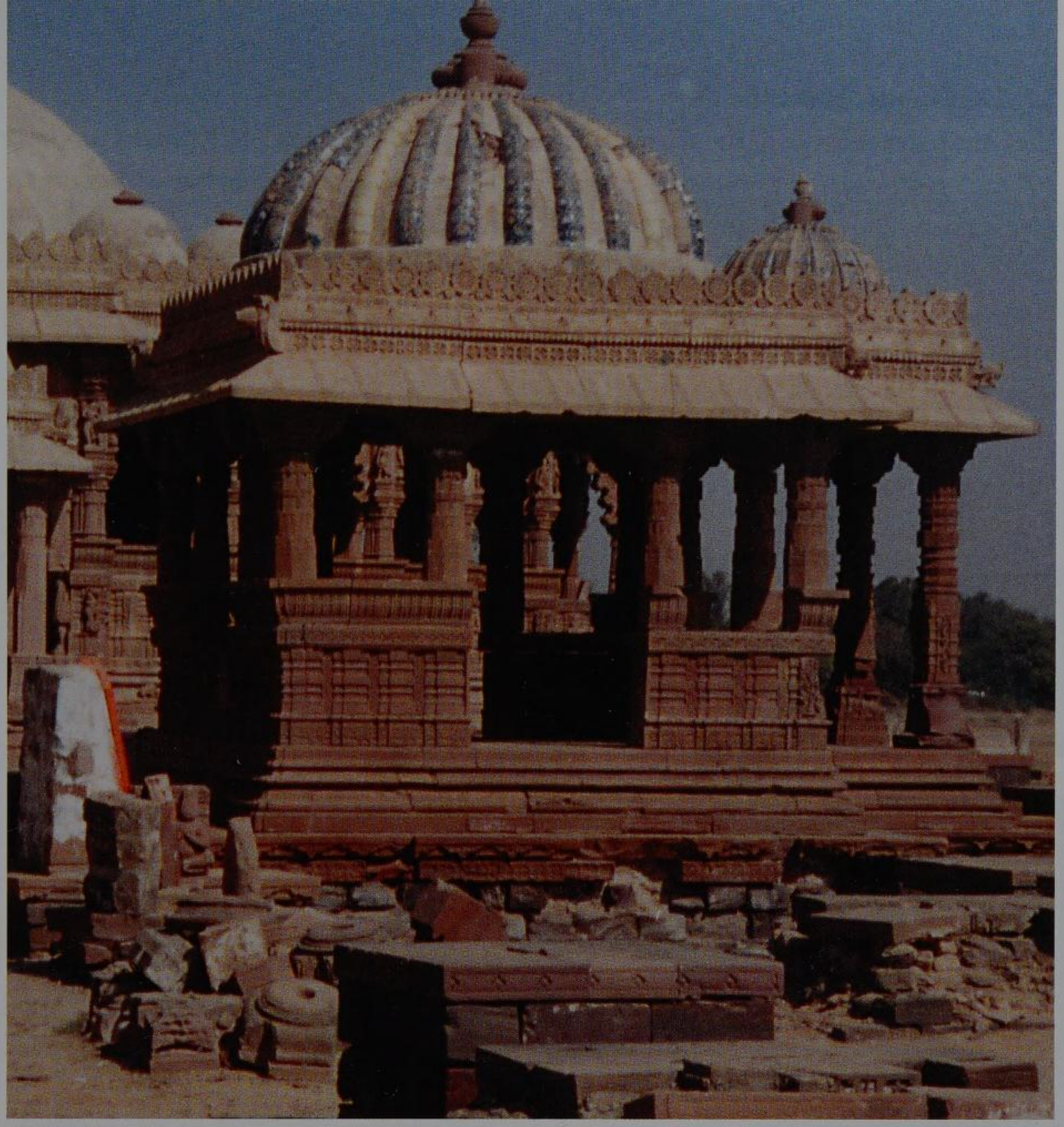
Above: View of Lakhpatji's *chhattedi*, photographed possibly in the 1880s.

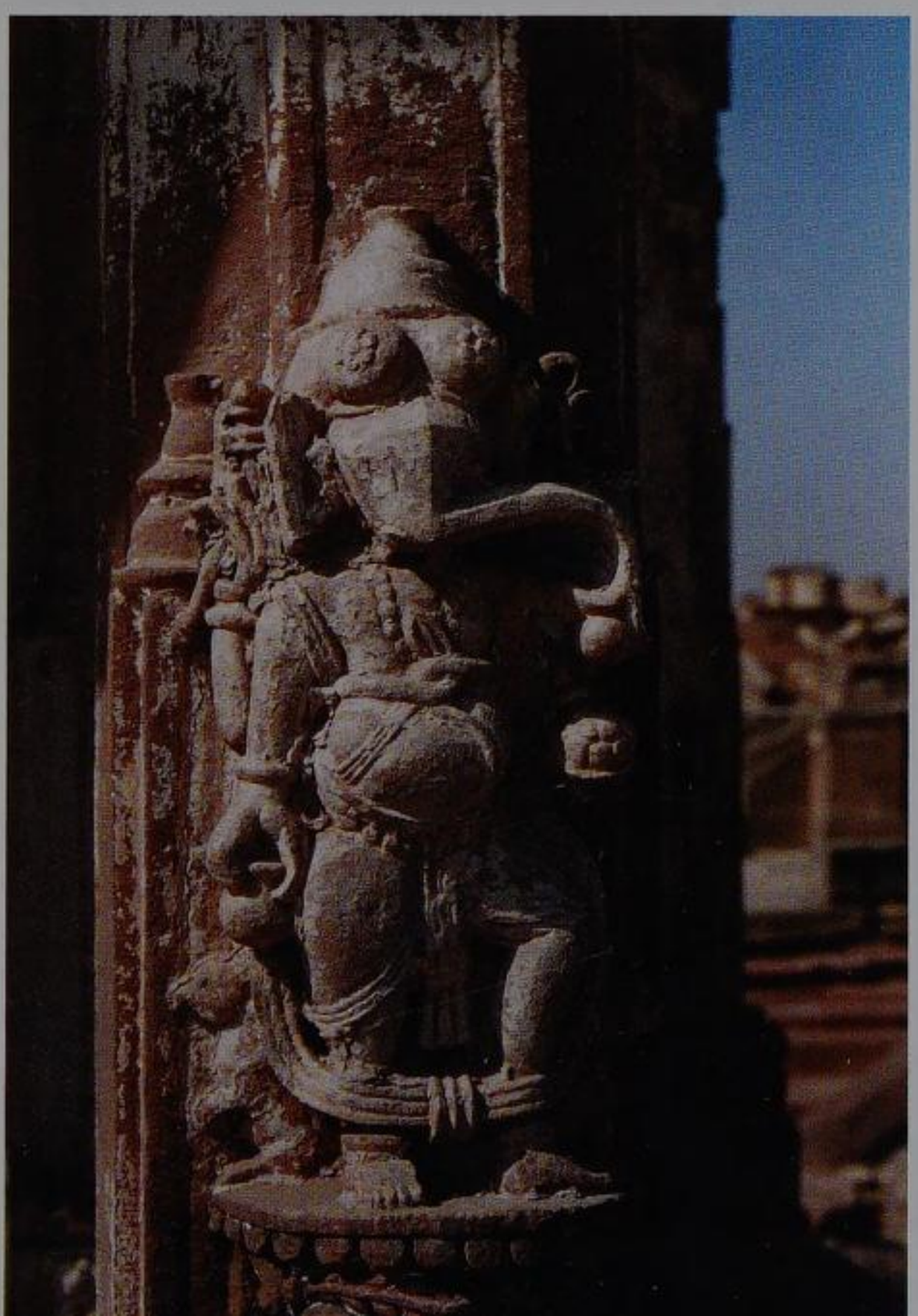
Below: Steps to Lakhpatji's *chhattedi.*

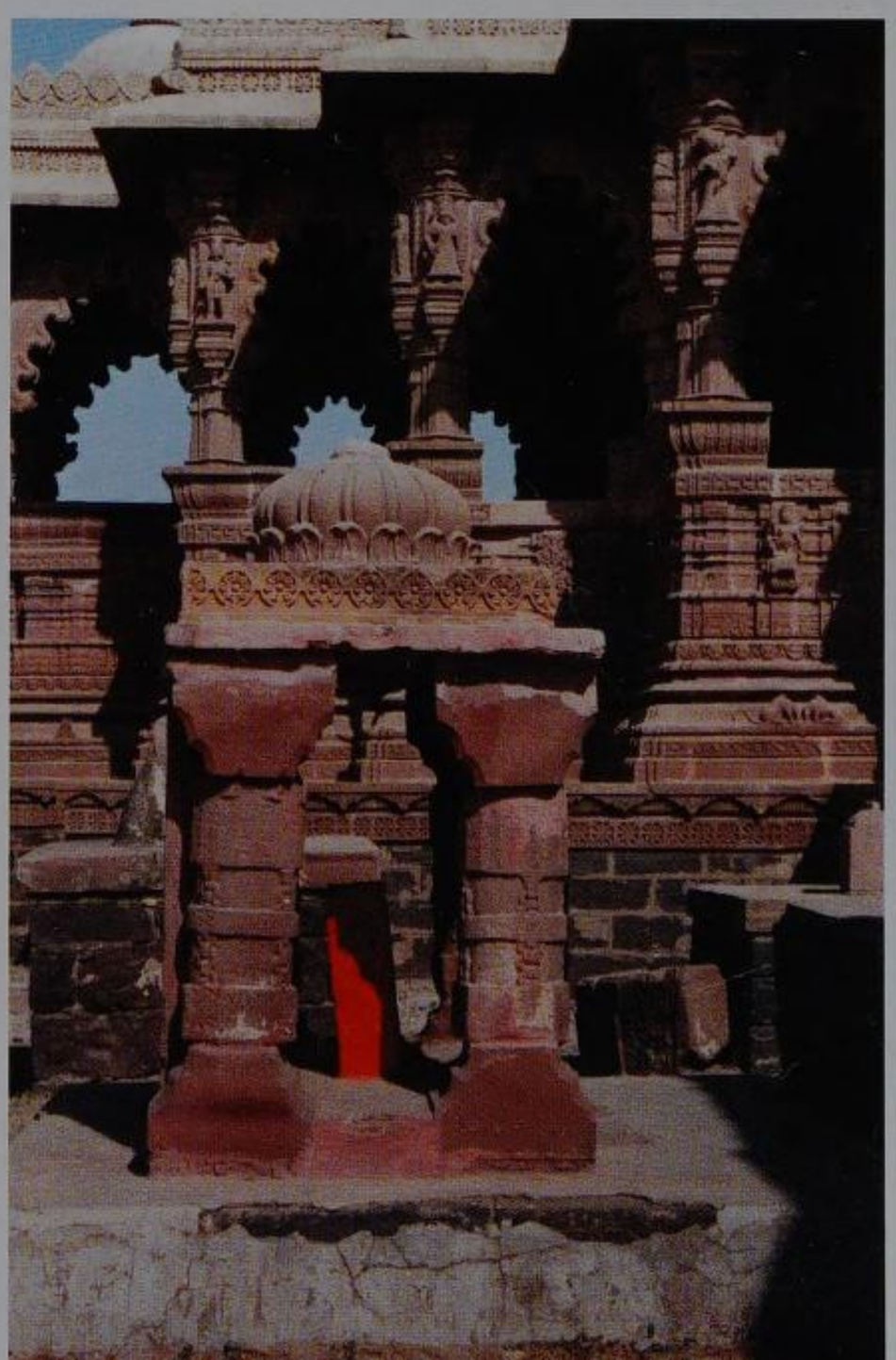
Facing page:
Above: Chhatri commemorating Rao Raidhanji II, next to Lakhpatji's cenotaph.

Below left: Detail of a sculptural relief of the god Ganesh in the cenotaph to Rupaliba, part of the complex of *chhattedi*s.

Below right: A shrine constructed from recycled architectural fragments.





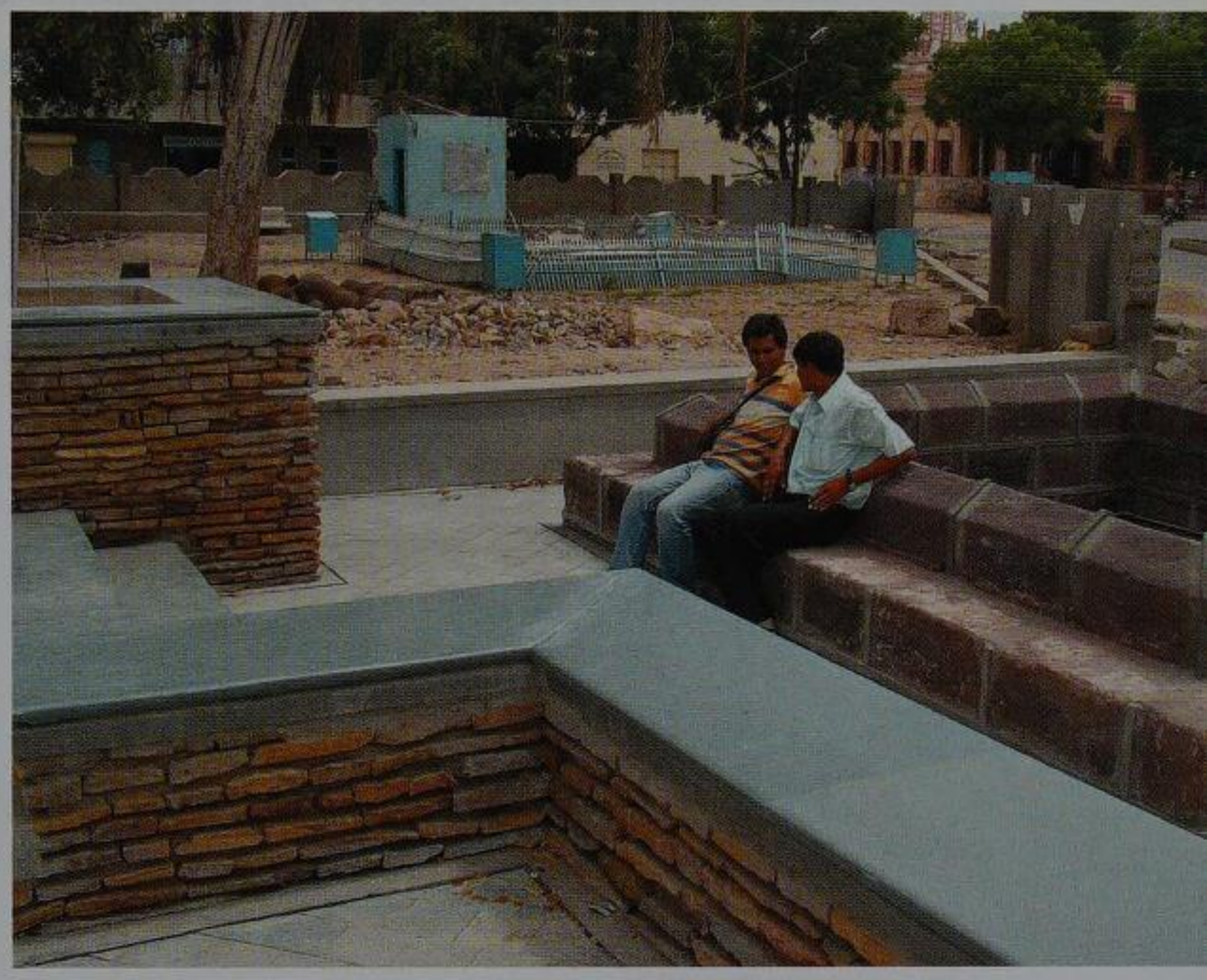


12. Dedka-*vav*, Nazar Bagh

This small, stepped well is part of a garden, Nazar Bagh, opposite the Kutch Museum. A late–19th century structure, the *vav* had been completely covered over by a restaurant and forgotten for several decades. During reconstruction, the restaurant had to be demolished, revealing the *vav*'s position. In consultation with civic leaders and environmentalists concerned about harvesting rainwater to augment the Hamirsar's output, architects devised a plan to restore the *vav*, transforming its immediate surroundings into a public space near which to gather, sit and talk. The *vav* has now begun to attract attention from visitors in the evenings. Nearby, a statue of Mahatma Gandhi, salvaged from a recently demolished 19th-century *chabutara* near the spot, appears to strut determinedly out toward the lake from the garden's corner.

The *vav* is a reminder of how unchecked, rampant development over forty years has choked the city's water supply by interfering with a natural network of cisterns, drainage channels and streams feeding the city's lakes. In 2002–2003, the Kachchh Nav Nirman Abhiyan concluded that the city's system of water channels, developed over a period of four hundred years, was being slowly obliterated by urban development. Pressure on land in Bhuj had begun to soar over three decades of in-migration, and the last remaining open spaces in the city were being steadily blanketed with high-rise buildings, many of which have not conformed to building by-laws and urban development regulations. Extremely heavy rainfall in the city in 2003 pointed to the ancillary effects of such neglect. Dedka-*vav* should remind people and politicians in Bhuj that if proper water supply and sewerage is to be a matter of public concern, then developers will have to follow the rules and enforce urban development regulations which aim to protect the environment.

Dedka-*vav*, uncovered in 2003.

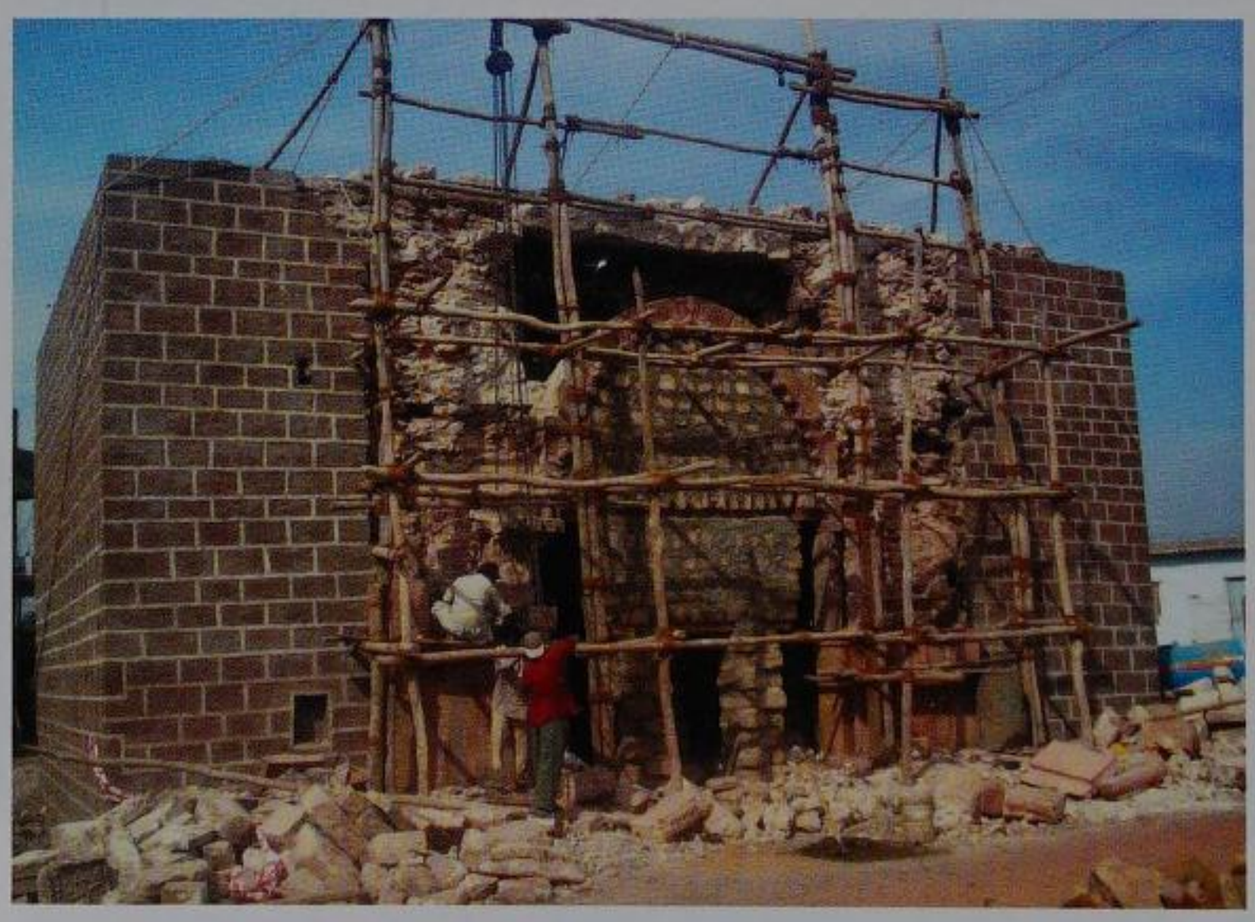


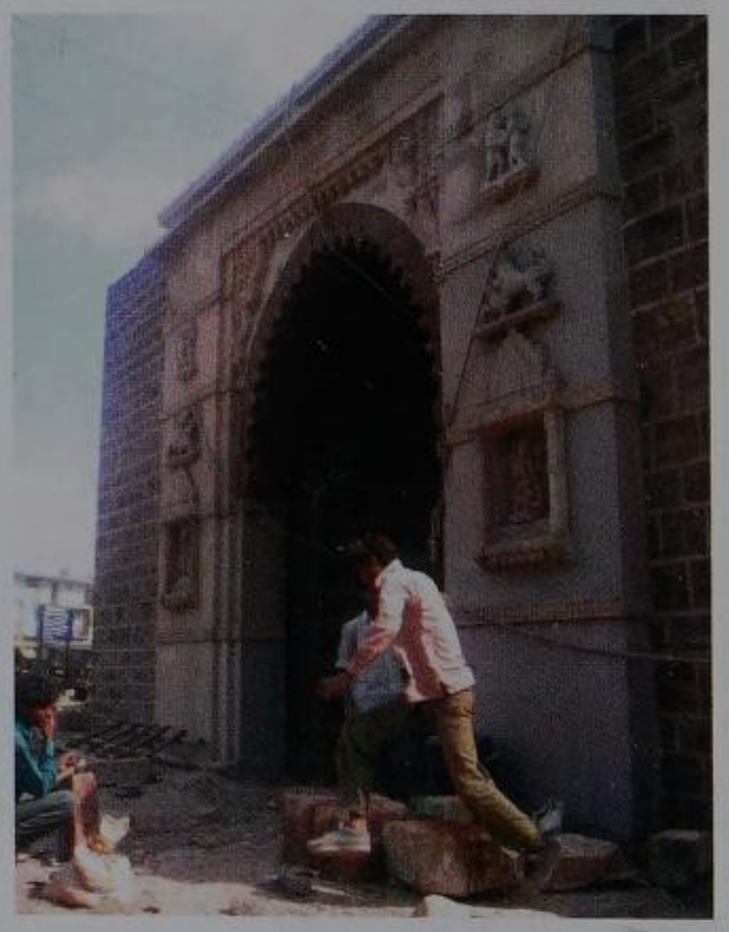
Above left: Arch, Dedka-*vav*, 2003.

Above right and below: Dedka-*vav*, restored in 2003.

13. Bhuj's gates

There were five gates to the walled city of Bhuj. Excepting Vaniawad Gate, which was demolished several years prior to the earthquake of 2001, all the others have suffered, although until recently they were considerably worse for wear. In 2004, the District Collectorate took on the challenge of restoring two of these gates. Work commenced quickly on Sarpat and Bhid gates, which have now been completely restored by INTACH. These represent a first, symbolic step in reinstating a sense of history, since they mark the genesis and conclusion of historic market streets. Patwadi Gate continues, however, to stand virtually in ruin.





206 Bhid Gate, photographed in the early 1990s and after being restored in 2004.

Sarpat Gate, photographed a few days after the earthquake. It was restored in 2004.

14. Bhuj's fort walls

Although the historic fortifications of the old city were built in 1723, these have witnessed much decay in the intervening years – crumbling in sections during the 1819 earthquake and again in 2001, demolished along the southern edge in the 1960s in response to development pressures, and breached again in the reconstruction process following 2001's disaster. Now what remains is vulnerable to encroachment and demolition. The wall presents a dilemma to conservationists and residents: it is weak in many parts and may present a danger to houses built against it, but could the city see it as an asset to tourism? The State Government recently restored the historic steps outside Mahadev Gate, where, for generations, people have sat to contemplate the Hamirsar. Areas further north are in danger of demolition if not shored up in time. These fragments of wall can be imaginatively used as space on which to project *son et lumières*, or lit at night as dramatic highlights to the city's skyline.

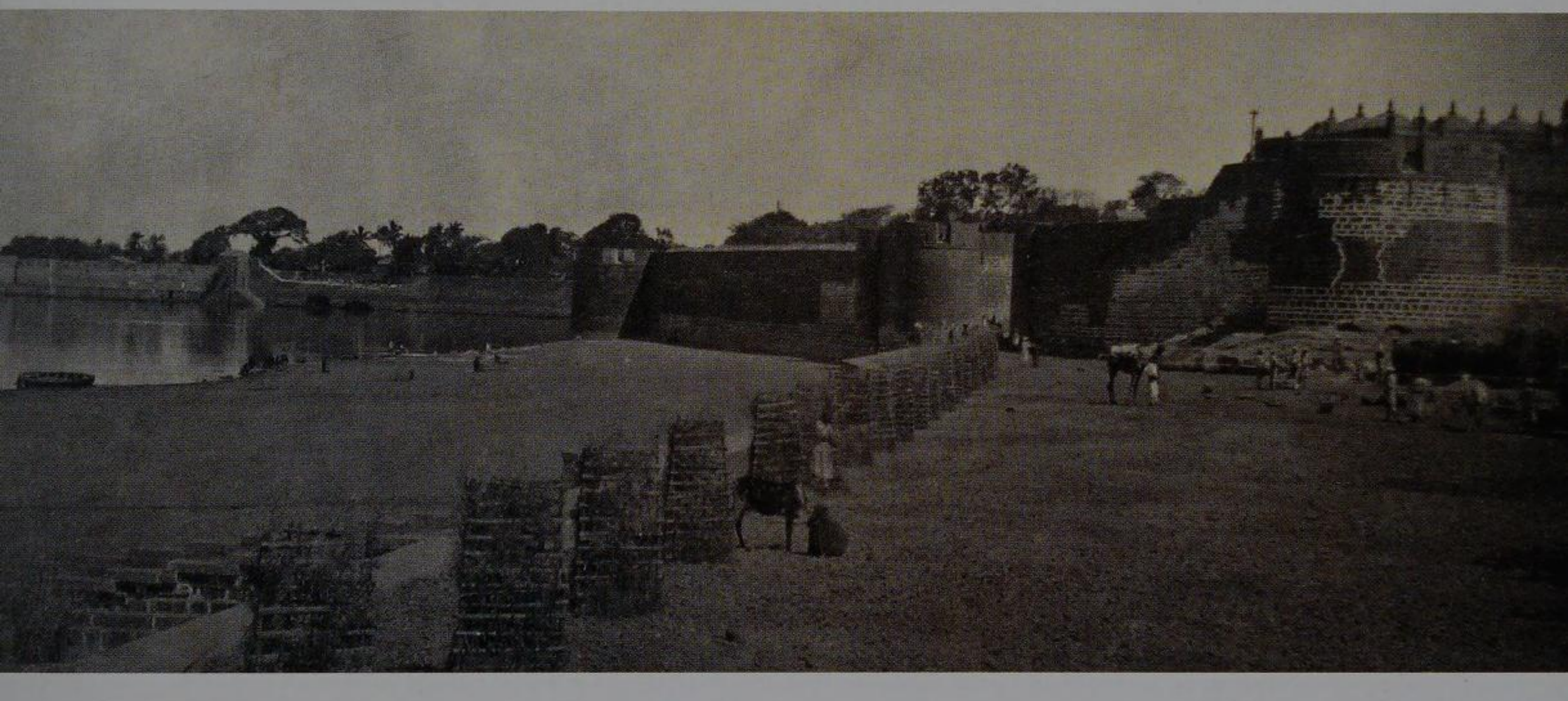
Left: The walled city's fortifications, photographed from a point adjacent to Bhid Gate. Thothawali *wandi* is in the foreground. The Ala *wala mukaam* is behind the wall, as is Airport Road.

Facing page:

Above: Hamirsar's overflowing, taken sometime in the early 1920s. The photographer perched himself atop Mahadev Gate's bastion (now demolished) to obtain this panoramic shot. Ahead, the Satyanaran Temple's gate is faintly visible, and one can see that the platforms for people to sit on against the fort wall have already been constructed.

Centre: The perimeter balustrade to the Hamirsar Lake has not as yet been built in this view of the lake looking toward Mahadev Gate, photographed sometime in the early 1880s. The triangular geometry of Pavdi Ghat is visible on the far bank at left. Of note is the breach in the fort wall adjacent to the ghat, which appears to have been corrected in the years to come, only to be exposed again, ironically, in the earthquake of 2001.

Below: A new retaining wall to Hamirsar Lake, 2003.



THE CITY RESCULPTED

Two types of change have shaped Bhuj, both with thought-provoking consequences, each revealing heartening and alarming patterns of development. In the first instance, change has been slow, over several decades of growth, and much in character with the sorts of transformation gripping cities throughout India. Thirty years of in-migration, technological advances in construction, the rising prosperity of a middle class and the population boom that would prove its corollary, all have taken their toll on the faces of traditional Bhuj. In the late 1960s, the construction of housing in Bhuj's old city began escalating as commercial interests overtook space constraints, so that badly constructed high-rises began to spring up where *falia*s had once been, with little thought given to building by-laws nor the possibility of imminent disaster. Such housing and commercial property contradicted the traditional Kachchhi house layout, tending completely towards a modern, universal design aesthetics. All this created, in the 1970s and '80s, a look and feel little different from any other small but quickly developing town in India.

In the second instance, the change in Bhuj has been almost instantaneous, wrought by the suddenness of an earthquake in 2001. In this second instance, residents have had little time to consider the niceties of contemplating a historic landscape, the complicated politics of the *falia*, or to attend to conserving what little might remain of their historic homes after a disaster. People have unapologetically prioritized rebuilding their houses and shops over the past five years in a manner which satisfies their most basic need for shelter and an income. Large parts of the walled city have witnessed almost constant transformation over the intervening months, most notably in 2003 when the Bhuj Area Development Authority undertook to demolish large areas where the shells of buildings continued to stand two years after the earthquake.

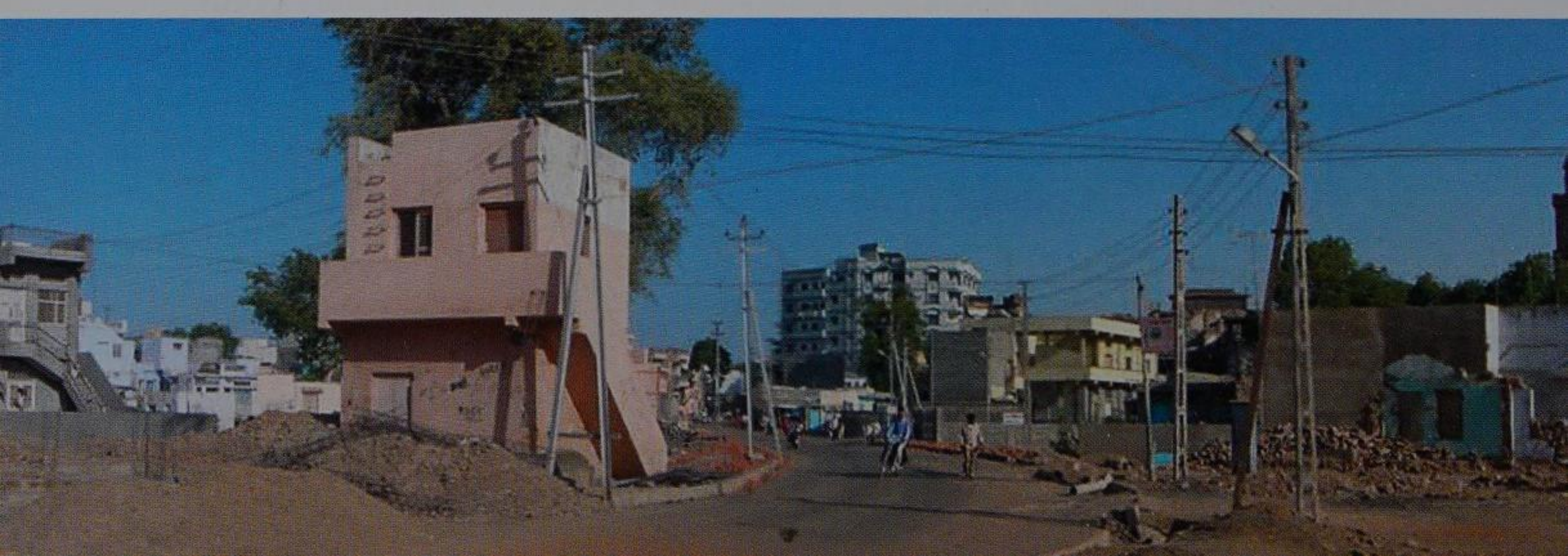
Comparative photographs of the city in the 19th and 20th centuries make surprising contrasts, and they should be seen as much more than pictorial comparisons: there are critical lessons to be learned from conscious juxtaposition. Above all, these pictures point to the problem of reintroducing a sense of craft to Bhuj, to debating the standards of civic beauty that we have set ourselves to, and which we commission from architects and builders today.

The panoramic photographs in earlier chapters and the comparative illustrations in this chapter only confirm the fact that development and erasure happen constantly, that they are inevitable to human progress. It would be unrealistic to expect the city never to change, something purist heritage conservationists are hard-pressed to admit in thinking that aesthetic standards are absolutely immutable and sacrosanct.

From these images, we see that tremendous changes have taken place in Bhuj over the past eighty years: older construction was, beginning in the late 19th century, when Pragmalji II began his building projects, modified or erased altogether to give way to newer buildings,

alteration which we today consider to be historic in value. While their replacement was, undoubtedly, equally if not better crafted, the fact remains that they were the culmination of a decision-making *particular to their time*. Another reason for alteration and erasure in the 19th and 20th centuries may have been the Maharao's absolute authority over property, since much of Bhuj's land belonged to him up until 1948. He remained, in a very real sense, both emblematic of state diktat and a private citizen: the single most powerful private property owner, but with the administrative and legal fiat to sponsor development and erasure.

By contrast, the stewardship of property in the 21st century depends more on the private ownership of property than ever before, and the modern state's intervention is limited to urban regulation in public areas, which include roads and government-owned properties. The spate of development and erasure that one sees in contemporary photographs which follow are a surprising contrast to images from the 19th century.



Erasure and insertion, 1870s to the 1990s

These two types of change reveal much about the underbelly of development in Bhuj; quite suddenly, an opportunistic development pattern seems to have concentrated and intensified in just a matter of 30 years into a canvas of houses and shops that is at once hearteningly energetic and shockingly ostentatious. This is no more evident than in relocation housing, where private development, spearheaded by wealthy communities, seems often to be at loggerheads with the ideal prospect of community housing (see page 229).

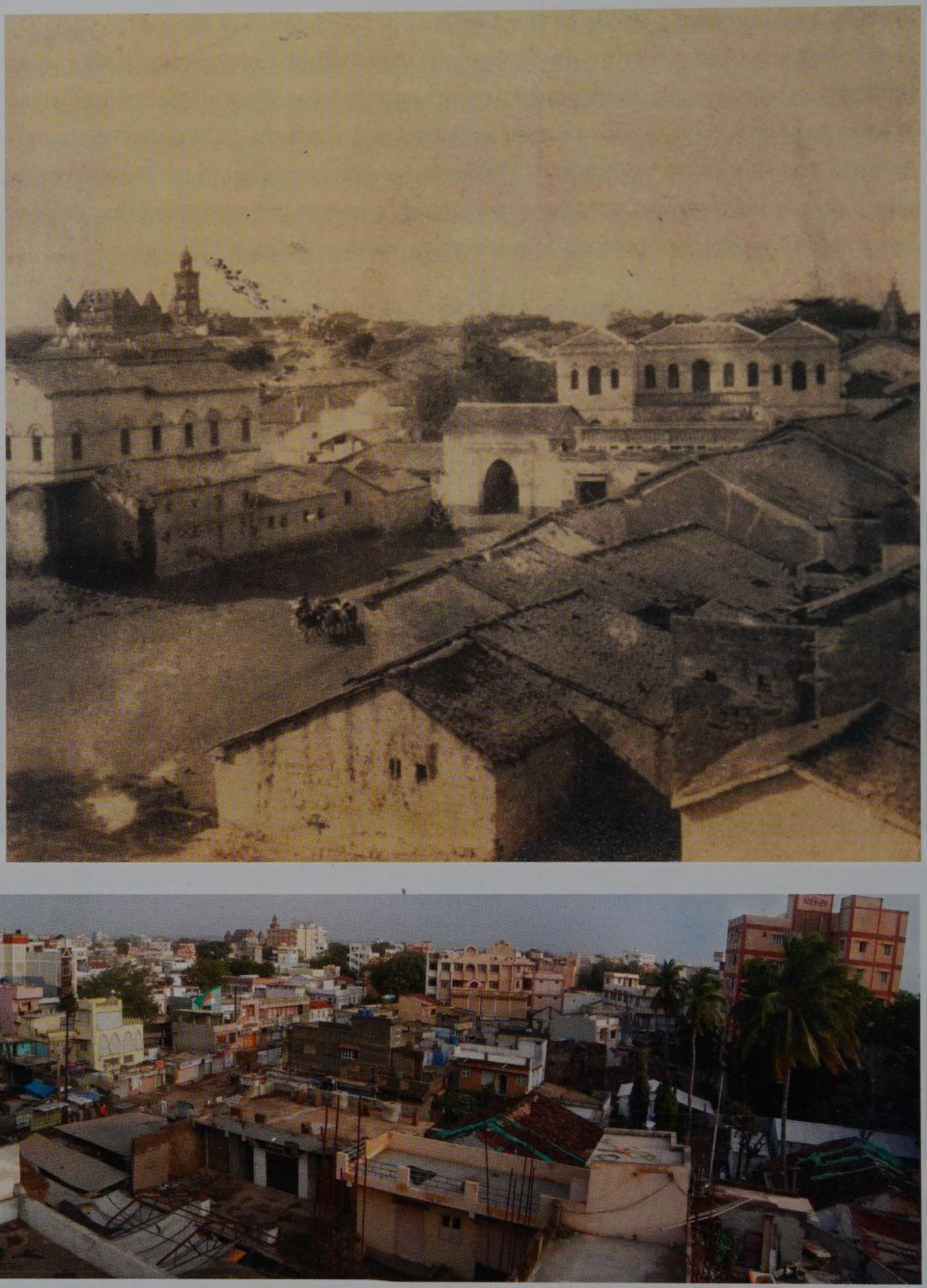
How will such transformation make a difference to the complexion of Bhuj?

Most major historic cities the world over have witnessed sometimes catastrophic transformation in their evolution over thousands of years. These transformations have happened in different ways, and to different degrees. We hear, for example, of historians speculating why

Above: Paburai Chowk, a 360-degree photograph showing the destruction to a neighbourhood, a few days after the earthquake, 2001.

Centre: Paburai Chowk, a 360-degree photograph of the area once rubble had been cleared, 2002

Left: Redevelopment in Paburai Chowk, 2004.



Above: A rare view of Vaniawad Chowk, photographed possibly in the early 1870s. The photographer positioned himself atop the fort wall adjacent to Vaniawad Gate. The Khoja *jamaat khana*, demolished after the earthquake, occupies the centre of the composition with Bhojak Sheri to its left. To its right is the road which leads from Vaniawad Chowk to Meherali Chowk. The Darbargarh's Clock Tower appears at top left.

Below: Vaniawad Chowk in 2005. Haphazard development has almost eclipsed the Darbargarh's Clock Tower.

and how the great Harappan civilization died (was it a colossal famine; a sudden change in the weather; or a flood?); or of the wars which ravaged cities like Jericho and Delhi, layering one city over another; or of how autocratic decisions by governments changed the face of cities like Rome, Paris, and New York from the 17th to the 20th centuries; or, indeed, of huge disasters reshaping entire parts of cities such as London after the Great Fire of 1666. At some stage in their eventful evolution, the face of most cities anywhere in the world has changed irrevocably, with all the attendant frustration, excitement and controversy that goes with such transformation.

An interesting thing to remember is the fact that changes or developments that were once considered extraordinary in several such cities many years ago are now no longer considered revolutionary; we now take them for granted because our minds register today's cities as being authentic to our present, and so changes made in the past seem static, natural and "original" to us.

Moreover, notions of heritage, of everything old and valuable, are in large part indebted to the possibilities of 20th-century technology, particularly the photographic camera, the ship, the aeroplane, and the telephone. Thanks to these inventions, we now have the luxury of making visual comparisons between what once was, and what now is, and transmitting what we find to anywhere in the world at very high speed. We are now in a position to constantly calibrate change happening minute by minute if we should so wish. Our forefathers did not possess the luxury of such technology, which to great extent supports the rhetoric and industry that is heritage conservation today.

View of the *chhatris* opposite Orient Colony and the lane leading to the Kutch Mitra offices, Bhuj, photographed in the 1880s. This rare photograph may have been taken on the occasion of the inauguration of the Dosabhai Lalchand *dharmashala*. A Seagram horsedrawn carriage is visible amongst the throng.

Umiyashankar Gor (b. 1909)

I remember how people used to travel by camel cart and bullock cart to come to Bhuj from many places in Kachchh. At the time (mind you, this was in the 1920s, when I was quite young), Bhuj had very few *pukka* buildings (they were built using *choona* and cement), and I remember most buildings of mud and thatch, especially in the Bhid area. Rajgors – the community from which I come – used to live in Rameshwar Sheri, off Khattri Chakla. There were about 40 families there, about 300 houses in total. Very few in the community at that time were educated, but even then from this community we had Hariram Damji Rajgor who became the Diwan of the Jagir of Tera, not far from Bhuj, with 40 villages under him. He was in a position to conduct Civil Court cases, although he had to leave criminal court cases to the authorities in Bhuj. Speaking of the law, incidentally, people who had passed their law examinations were allowed to practise the law irrespective of their basic educational qualifications, which could be Matriculation or even lower.

I remember that education up to the first four standards was in Gujarati. English was taught as a subject only from Middle School (5th to 7th standards) onward. We had only one high school, the Alfred High School, for study upto matriculation. We didn't have a single college up until 1956–1957, when Lalan College was built.

At that time, around the 1920s, Khattri Chakla was a very mixed place, with Rajgors, Khattris (both Hindu and Muslim) and other Muslim denominations living there. Excepting a few businessmen who plied their trade off Rajgor Vitha Falia, Khattri Chowk, and along the Saraf Bazaar, most people in the area worked at the Court doing housework, and arranging rituals, including those for death. A few residents even practised agriculture as a livelihood, but this was of course on the outskirts of the city. Several of these farmers owned farms fed by rain water, which they would store in wells located outside the city. Sometimes, they'd be helped by women of the house.

We had very strict social customs at the time. People from the higher castes would never accept anything to eat or drink from those of the lower castes. So as Audichya Brahmins, for example, we would not accept anything from Lohanas. I remember that everywhere they went, Brahmins would sanctify their immediate surroundings with cow urine, and if they had to sit anywhere they would do so on wooden planks. Audichya Brahmins served as priests to the Rajgor community, living in Sanchora Sheri – which has now of course been largely demolished after the earthquake – and they earned their living largely in the service of the King.

Festivals in Bhuj used to be celebrated with great fanfare! Not only did people buy new clothes for Diwali, but men would get their ears pierced and wore caps of gold and

silver. We would paint the horns of our cattle and buffaloes on Dhanteras, the first day of Diwali. Ghee would be packed in leather bags. There was a curious custom also – practised only by a particular class of people whose name I can't remember – of placing small metal balls in leather bags and suspending them from cows' horns, so that when shuffled the bells would jingle in a distinctive manner that would keep cattle moving. Watching them on the move outside Vaniawad Gate became quite the local attraction.

During Navratri, traditional devotional songs would be sung; there would be musical soirées at which the Lungha musicians from Lungha Sheri would perform, and the *garba* would be danced in the Aina Mahal courtyard.

Everyday life was comparatively relaxed. Women would sit in groups outside their houses (even in the morning while cleaning their teeth, and then later in the day) discussing their daily affairs and the day's events. Women otherwise were not allowed to attend public events; they could meet and mix only with members of the family. They were otherwise relegated to the kitchen.

Routine meals included *bajra rotla* and buttermilk (milk if you were rich) for breakfast, *rotla* and a vegetable for lunch (we Rajgors ate vegetables only from our community farm outside the city, and otherwise buttermilk or *dal)*. In those days, women would cook dried vegetables that had been stored at home season after season; they could not go to market to buy fresh greens.

It was not the done thing for people of the higher classes to drink tea outside the home. Tea houses, like the ones on Talav Sheri, were frequented by the lower classes. There simply wasn't a culture of "eating out" in those days, at least not until the late 1940s and the years after Independence. I remember that in the early days we used to consider tea to be the sick man's drink; if you were found drinking it in public you'd be asked about your health!

I remember a few very special places. Every Saturday evening, the State's band used to play at the bandstand just off Khakh Chowk, very close to Mahadev Gate, named after the ash from the fire of Naga *bawa*s who would camp there. Saturday was always designated a half-day. You had to make sure you weren't outside the city's walls after dark, or else you might be locked out for the night, when the guards locked the city's five gates, Sarpat at 8 p.m., Patwadi at 9 p.m., and finally Mahadev Gate at 10 p.m. Once these gates had been closed, guards would hand the keys to the city over to someone in the Royal Household, who would place them all at the King's bedside for the night. It was his duty to report the day's happenings on the streets to the King as he handed the keys over. The gates would be reopened at 4 a.m., and the *fauzdar* for the night would then be asked for a report of the night's goings-on to the King later in the morning.

Only parts of the city looked truly developed in the early 1920s; those roads which led from Sarpat Gate to Khatri Chakla, and from Saraf Bazaar to Vaniawad Gate, were paved with tar. These would be lit at night with streetlights, which were a new phenomenon at the turn of the century in Bhuj. The lamps were made to hold two to three hours' worth of kerosene, by which time it was assumed that everyone would be indoors when the streets went dark again!

Every house had a *gau shala*, a place in which to keep domestic cattle. This was the standard practice throughout Bhuj, in all communities, I think. All of us had wells in our houses, fed by springs and water ducts connected to larger wells which in turn were fed by the Hamirsar Lake and several small ponds. We bathed by the well – and we did not use soap, which was unheard of then. Instead, we used *magmaathi* (bentonite) soda, and we washed our hair with *areettha*, which kept the hair silky and light. Brass vessels came much later; at the time we continued to use earthen pots fired in the kilns that you'd find north of Sarpat Gate, made by the Kumbhaar community in Kumbhaar Akhada.

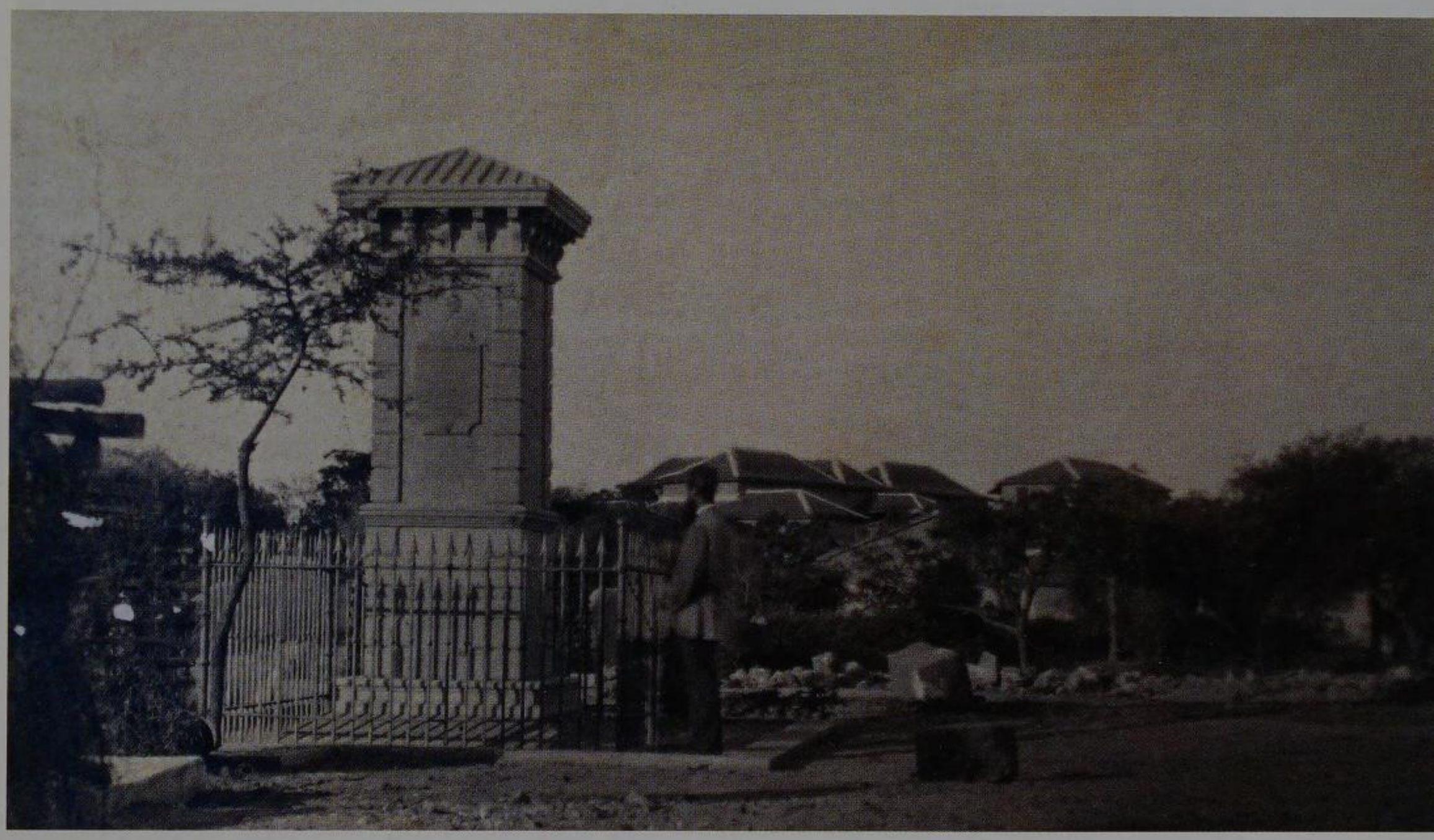
We dressed quite simply. Regulation clothing at the time included *dhoti* and *kurta*, or a shirt-coat and cap. It was only in the 1930s that the pyjama-half coat-and-trousers came into vogue. Wearing a shirt and trousers was considered rather fashionable in the late 1920s, if you were lucky enough to own a pair. Lohana Jains were rich and they were always being invited to the Court. They used to wear *dhoti*, shirt, a long coat, *pagh* (turban), and bore sticks. This was high society "couture". The common man used to wear a *choino* (something like *chooridaar* trousers with many pleats), shirt, coat, and a cap.

Following the daily affairs of the Royal Court was an elaborate affair, and if you wanted to attend it you either had to have a genuine grievance to take to Ra Bawa or be related to someone important who could let you in to the durbar. You had to wear your best *pagdi* in the Kachchhi manner, and be immaculately turned out, with waxed moustache, polished shoes, and your umbrella. The highest officials of the King would listen to daily complaints and try redressing people's grievances. This would take the better part of the morning. Khengarji III was particularly impartial when passing judgement, and there were even several incidents when the Maharao punished his own relatives if they were found guilty.

If the local judge or an advocate at the Court did you a favour, it was customary to give him a present, a product from your own fields such as fruit, vegetables or grain. We actually categorized the recipient of these gifts in three ways: he was either *mittho khaiyo*, or one who does not expect a gift but who stills obliges commoners; *kharo khaiyo*, or one who expects compensation of some sort and will not work for you until he has been given it; and *hadkyo khaiyo*, one who wouldn't even look at you unless you gave him a gift, and even then might not do you a favour at all!

If cities are to change constantly, there is little point in being overly nostalgic about them, particularly after a cataclysmic disaster. When we talk about "old" Bhuj, what exactly makes it "old"? And at what point exactly do we make the distinction between what is "old" and "new" about Bhuj, indeed any city? Can we really pin such distinctions down to a specific date or event? Arguably, not, partly because we have little evidence on which to go in many cases, and because trends evolve over a number of years, never in a single moment. Besides, it is human nature to improve upon old things, to tinker with them and to hide their imperfections as they age.

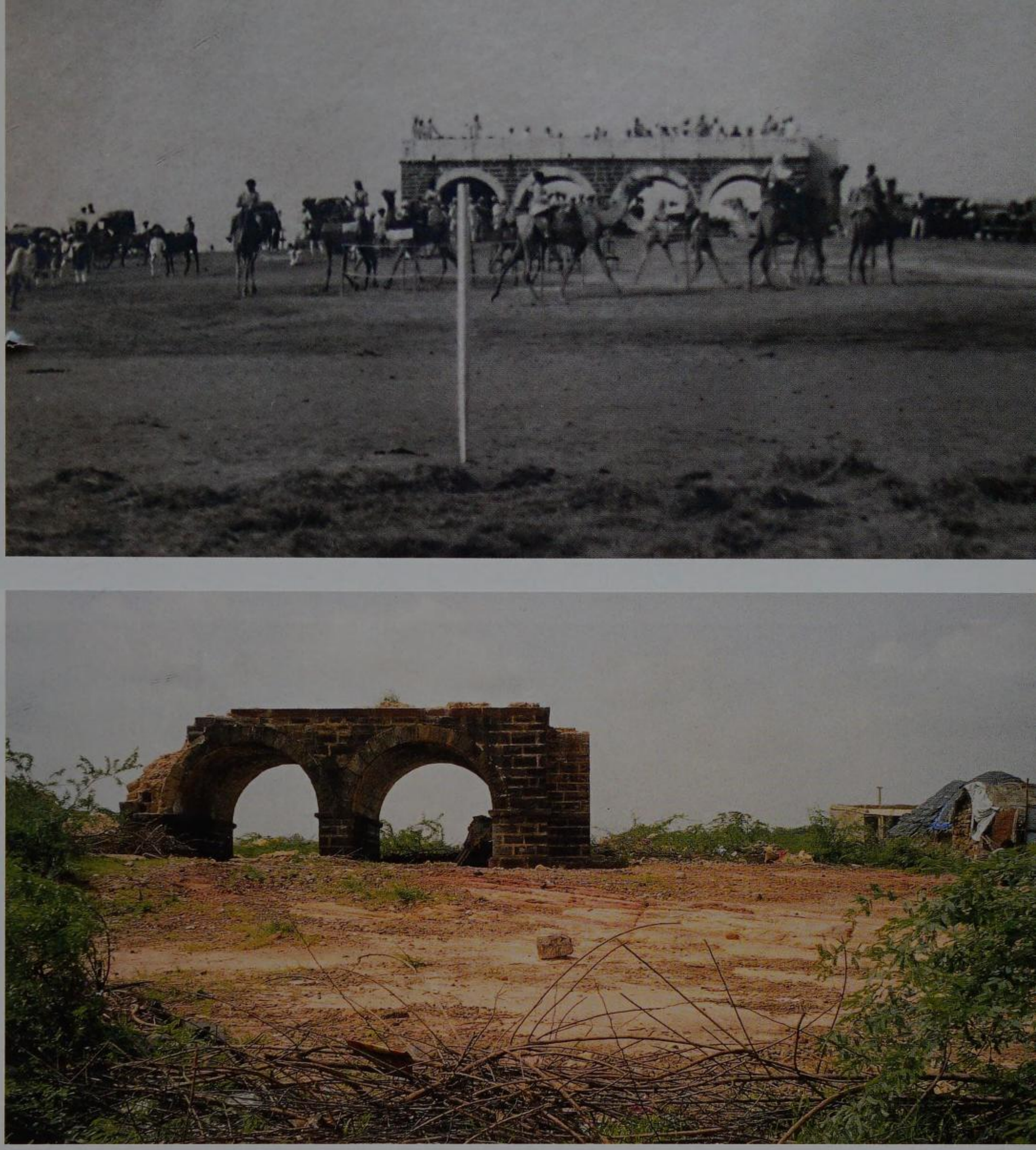
So then, as things constantly change, what remains "authentic" about them? Such questions are extremely important to considering problems of post-earthquake reconstruction in Bhuj. The city was a vibrant, beautiful little town in the 17th and 18th centuries, boasting an extraordinary architecture patronized by Maharao Lakhpatji's court, its markets abuzz with colourful commerce, its *falia*s teeming with people of different social backgrounds. But then – if Marianna Postans and her compatriots writing in the mid-19th century are to be believed – the earthquake of 1819 tore this reality apart, bringing sweeping changes to bear on its topography. What the earthquake of 1819 did was to re-order the city of Bhuj in subtle ways, bringing new ways of building (influenced by British engineering and construction norms in practice elsewhere)



A column commemorated to "Madame Mary" outside the British Residency (now the property of the Office of the District Collector and Magistrate), visible in the background, photographed in the late 1870s along a stretch of road once known as Madame Mary Marg. This column still stands, but has lost its significance in the maelstrom of development that has overtaken the city. The road leads to the Kalyaneshwar, Jagannath and Bhootnath Temple complexes, not visible in this photograph but outside its right edge.

Above: View down Uplipal Road, c. 1940, facing south. There are a wealth of associations behind this streetscape. At far left were a house belonging to Kamlaben, famed throughout Bhuj for her home-made *mamra*; Mukundrai Chhaya's residence; and the house of the well-known teacher Chhotalal Sevakram 'Master', who tutored Khengarji III's brother, Kaluba. Behind them was the blind widow Manchhaba's *dela*, where she regularly performed bhajans, and the Vora saat-*no-delo*. Several well-known people lived or worked along the stretch of buildings to the right of the picture, including Pratapbhai Gajjar, Bahadur Singh Jadeja, Prasangrai Hathi, Ramniklal "Mithabhai" Dholakia, and Umashankar Bhagvanlal Mankad. The Hatkeshwar Temple, invisible in the photograph, is beyond and to the right of the military jeep.

Below: View down Uplipal Road, 2003, facing south. Urban development over the past forty years has proven to be inconsistent with the street's character, and largely reflects a commercialism that has driven residents to sell their properties to developers eager to build inferior highrises. In the 1970s and '80s, Sreeji Apartments and Hatkesh Complex replaced Manchhaba's *dela*, and Tapovan Apartments eclipsed the old Rajput Boarding House.

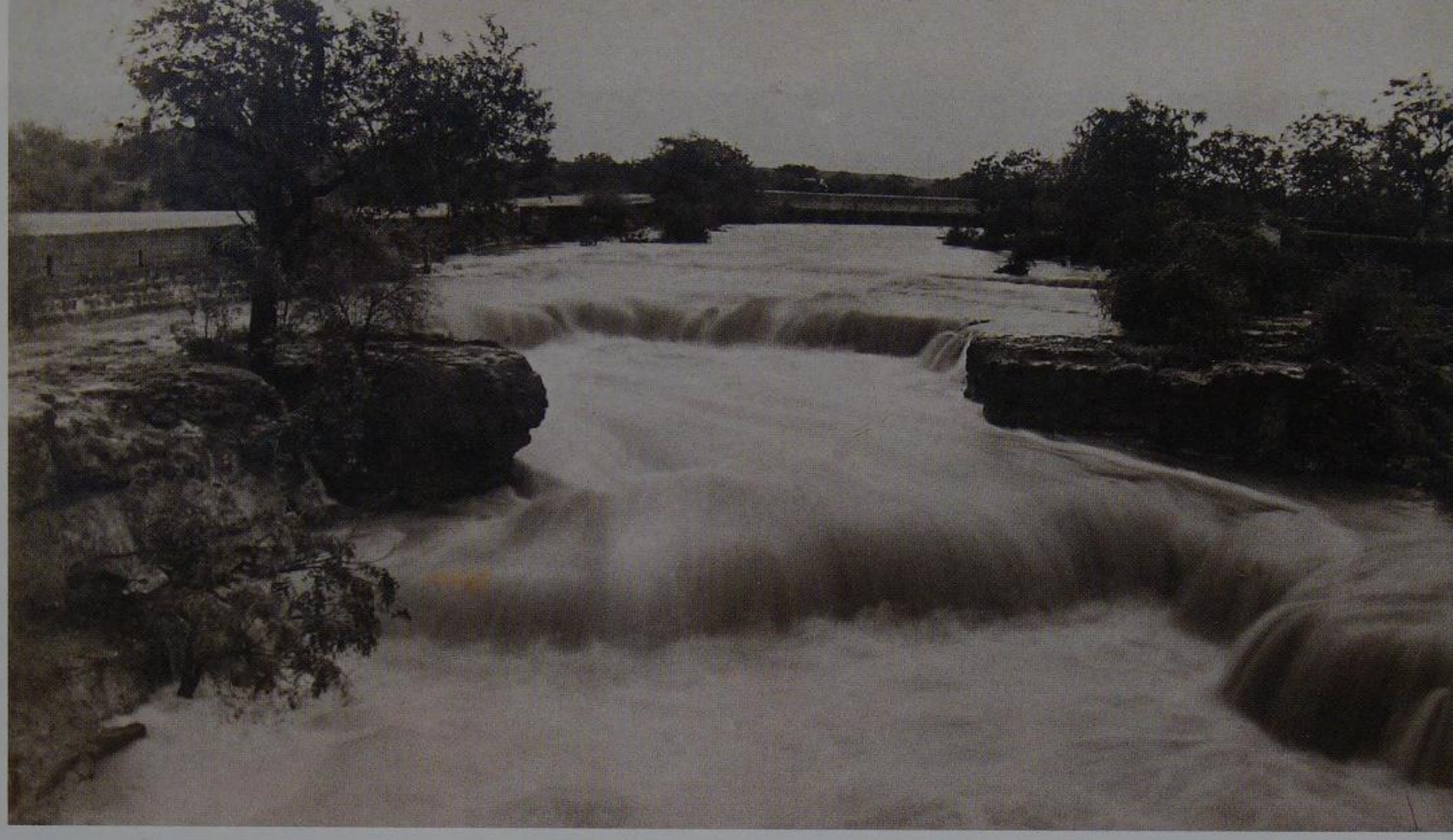


Above: Kharsra pavilion, photographed in the 1940s. The arcaded pavilion provided a convenient platform from which to view sports on the field.

Below: The pavilion, photographed in 2002, only a fragment of which now remains. In the intervening sixty years Kharsra *maidan* has been overwhelmed by encroachment and garbage disposal. Its original function as an open field for repose and play has been completely forgotten, partly due to the pressures exerted by in-migration and development, and partly due to the inexcusable neglect of open spaces as a public asset. As Bhuj expands further and further outward, real estate speculation will escalate the price of land, further weakening the argument that open space should remain open for its own sake.

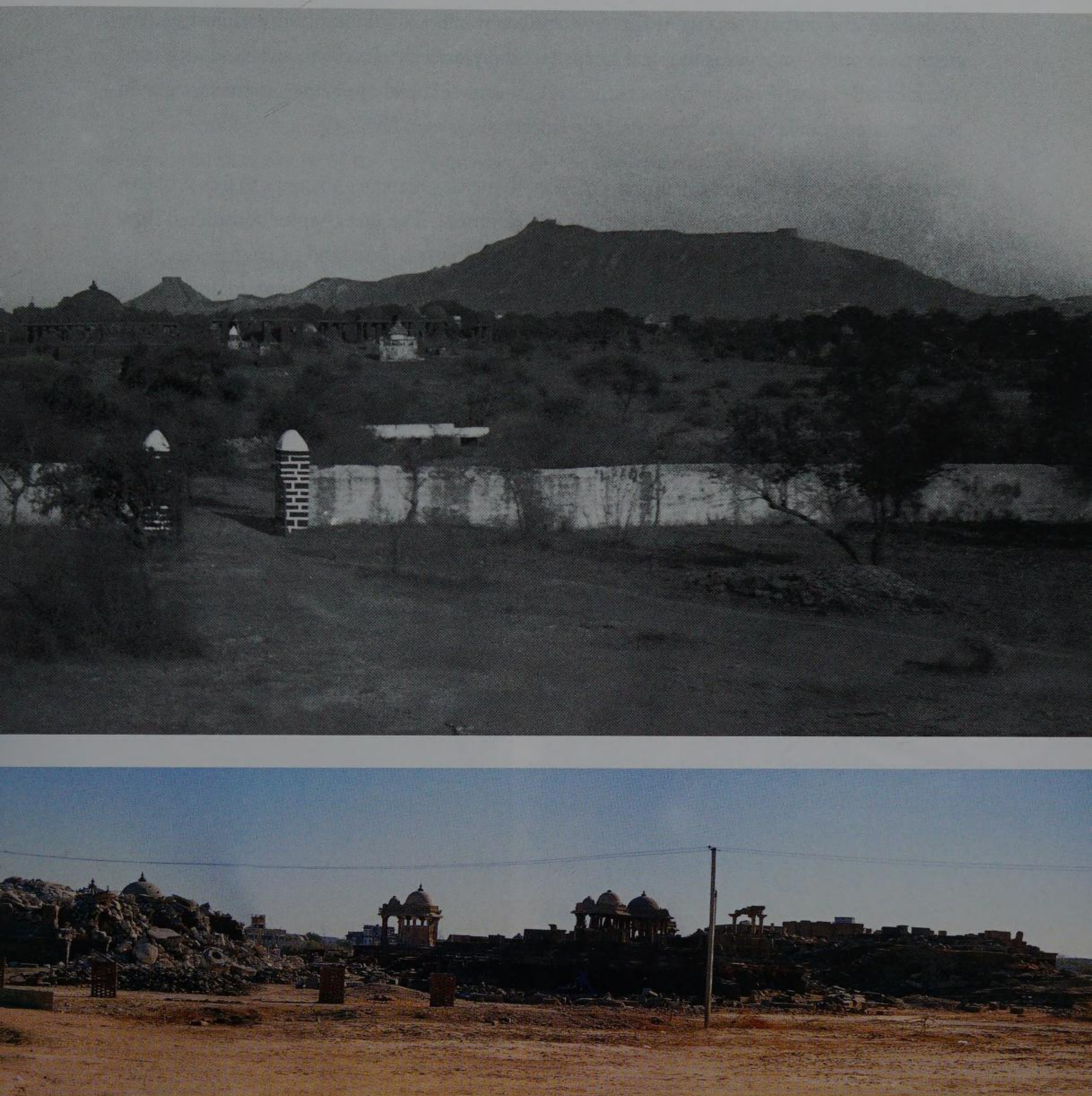
Above: The Jail in Bhuj, recorded by an unknown photographer during the late 1870s. "This view shows the walled enclosure in which the jail stood, near the Sirpat city gate. It was designed as a version of the panopticon system proposed for the creation of safe and humane prisons by the English philosopher Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832). Cells are arranged in radiating ranges around a central surveillance tower from which prisoners could be observed. In late 19th-century India this was considered a modern form of construction and was used for new prisons in Gujarat and other states. The jail also included a workshop, kitchens, and women's quarters and could hold up to four hundred prisoners." By permission of The British Library, London.

Below: The grounds outside the Bhuj Jail, photographed in 2003. The area now houses the district's Police Headquarters.



Above: This photograph of a unique rock formation outside the District Collector and Magistrate's office in Bhuj that is a local spectacle during the monsoons was taken sometime in the early 1920s. It demonstrates the efficiency and beauty of a centuries-old network of water channels which relayed water away from Hamirsar Lake when it overflowed during the monsoons. This is a rare sight today, largely due to the pressures of callous and illegal urban development that have altered the course of water and obliterated many of these vital channels.

Below: Insensitive urban development, land reclamation and illegal encroachments have forced water to find its own outlets and levels. The tremendous waste of a natural resource should prompt residents to reflect on the consequences of rampant development.



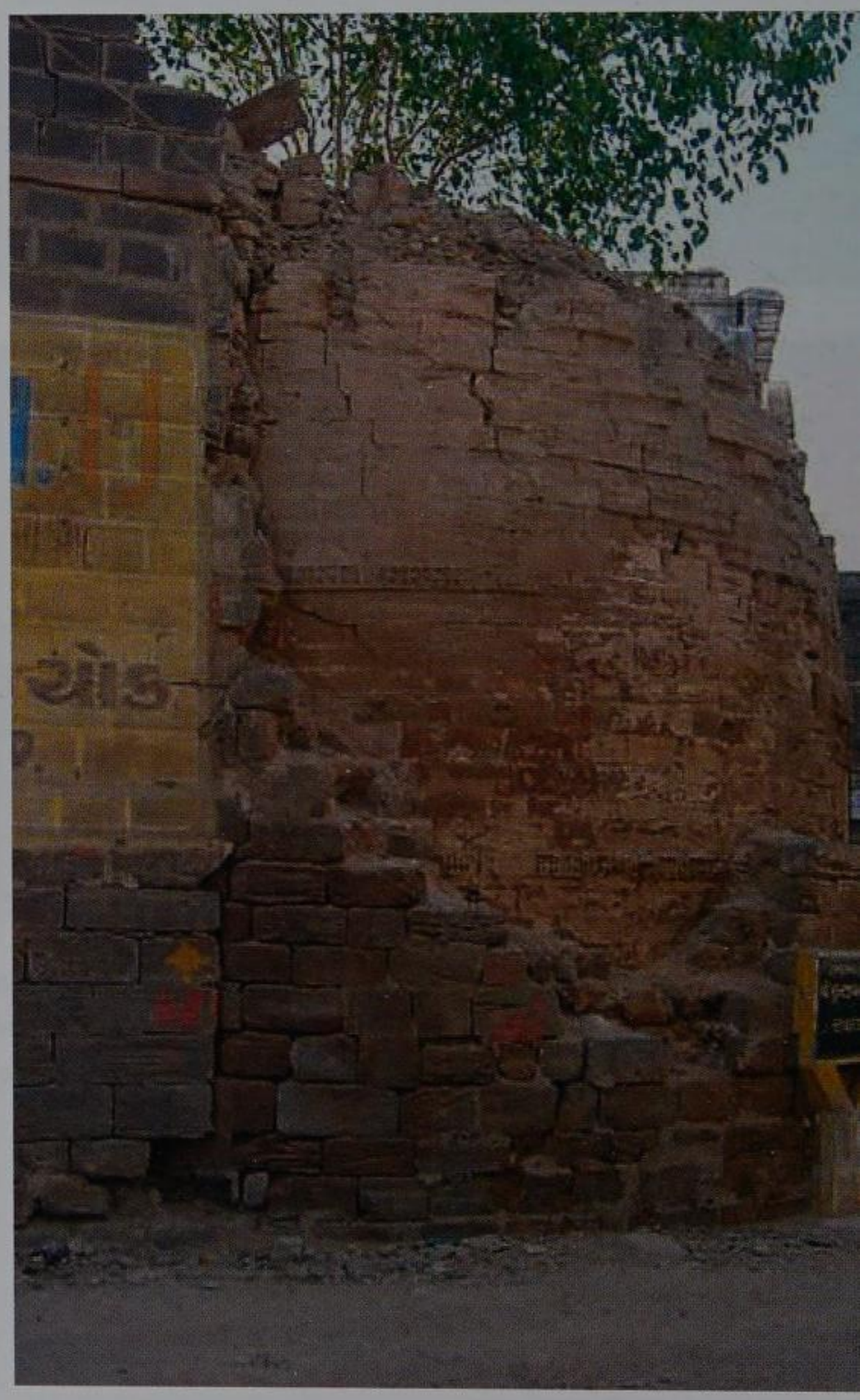
Above: View of the *chhattedi*s from Kotdi Bagh, photographed sometime in the early 1930s. The land surrounding this historic complex was almost completely open up until the 1970s, when speculation and in-migration sponsored new colonies that began to ring the *chhattedi* complex.

Below: The *chhattedi*s in ruins, 2001.

into vogue and perhaps erasing much of what was "traditional" about Bhuj's architecture. We might, of course, only guess that this happened; there are few records to substantiate it, and precious little visual evidence but for the imprint of very old buildings in the city that have been retained after rubble was removed after the earthquake (pages 236, 242).

So, change is inevitable and difficult to date. But there is a greater significance to this problem of change, and it relates directly to Bhuj's redevelopment. The first chapter considered how Bhuj's growth has been influenced by two types of change. One kind of change has been gradual, with the city expanding significantly southward from the 1970s onward (forty years of slow, unscrupulous and haphazard real estate development), all but erasing the "historic" character that defined the old city. The context in which all this happened is actually much larger: the emergence of New Money in the 1990s with economic liberalization, and an increase in population as more and more people have moved to the city from the hinterlands in search of better jobs. The other sort of change, however, is of the sudden variety, where an earthquake inexplicably altered the city's landscape overnight, making us realize that everything the city took for granted about our environment had now been relegated to memory and nostalgia.

Had it not been for this earthquake, Bhuj might probably have continued to change slowly, modernizing and expanding, for it to look eventually like any other modern city in India, replete with buildings that could have been built anywhere. But when the earthquake happened, people began to question not only the relevance of an old townscape with buildings and narrow streets that were unsafe in an earthquake-prone zone, but the very



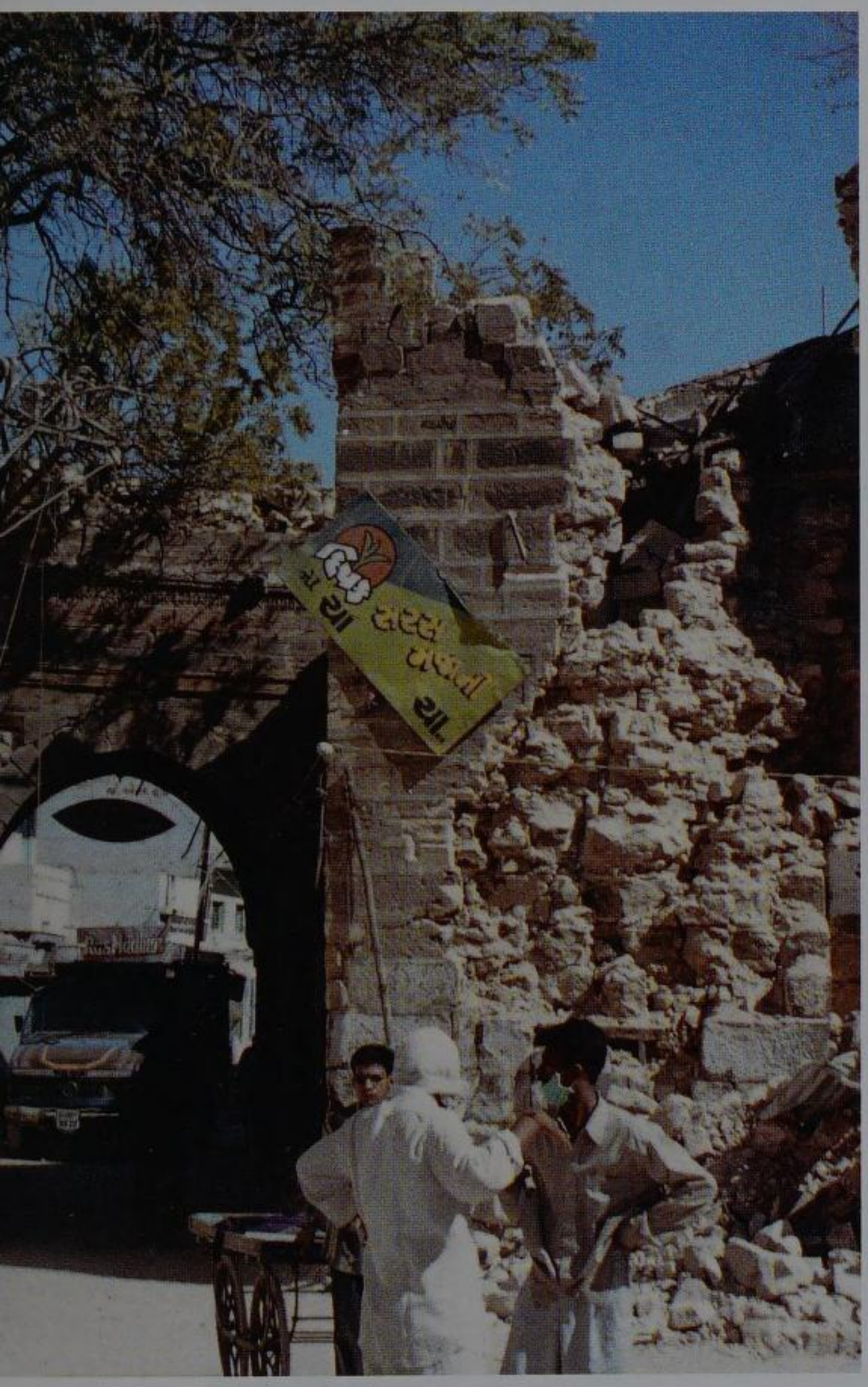
Right: The 2001 earthquake revealed a second, older, layer to the Darbargarh's retaining wall, dating back to the years immediately following the earthquake of 1819, when much of Bhuj would be rebuilt with even older stones.

Facing page:
Left and right: Ironically, the 2001 earthquake also revealed elements that had long remained hidden under layers of development. Part of the retaining wall outside the *nagaara khana* in Holi Chakla (Darbargarh Chowk) was exposed, revealing a spiral staircase leading into the wall's hollow, cavernous interior. The wall merits attention as a historical artifact, and may give credence to the charming myth of a secret passage out of the city, if only as a magnet for tourism.

nature and operation of modern-day development and infrastructure given any scenario, earthquake or no earthquake. It became slowly clear to people that to see this unfortunate event as a calamity would in one sense limit our understanding of its effects on society; that it should, more positively speaking, be viewed as an *opportunity* to review overall the state and machinery of the city's growth, and to see post-earthquake reconstruction as a means to effecting much larger changes in the way the city functions.

Replanning Bhuj, 2001–2003

Understanding the planning process will give the reader a sense of how difficult it can be for us to make simple decisions about what to preserve about a city's culture, its image, and its form, when there are practical issues at stake in the redevelopment process. Apparently small issues, such as the need to preserve a historic community building or a revered tree, take on a much larger significance when one has also to design good roads, better housing, and earthquake-safe measures. At best, the conflict between old and new form must be reduced to a carefully considered choice, which is most often irreversible. We are forced to



evaluate our "baggage", therefore, as objectively as we can, which is admittedly difficult to do. The torturous project of conserving some aspects of the city's culture nostalgically while relinquishing others becomes largely a matter of practical decision-making at the expense of romanticism, so that the logic to "preserve" becomes (uncomfortably) untenable when we are faced with the responsibility of providing new houses and new livelihoods.

The Draft Development Plan for Bhuj, 2011

Soon after the earthquake occurred, the Government of Gujarat began deliberating the possibility of either reconstructing Bhuj *in situ* or building an entirely new city away from the old settlement.[80] This became the subject of hot public debate, but eventually, heeding public demonstrations by professionals and business groups, the government decided in favour of reconstructing the city's old core, partly because it was the more practical, feasible option considering that the cost of building new infrastructure would prove exhorbitant comparative to restoring systems already in place, albeit badly damaged; but also because public sentiment in the media and on the street seemed to indicate an overriding emotional attachment to the old city.

The question remained, however: what legal framework could guide redevelopment where reconstruction would not be lawless and ad hoc, but rather ensure that the redevelopment efforts anticipate any future problems, as well as project improvements to the city, with a long-term perspective?[81]

The government decided, after some deliberation, that the Gujarat Town Planning and Urban Development Act (GTPUDA) of 1976 could serve as an appropriate legal framework for all reconstruction activity to follow. It realized that, over twenty-five years, the city had witnessed considerable, unregulated (sometimes outrightly illegal) development that had compromised the city's image, and spawned development on land that could have been put to better use. The photographs in this book illustrate a relatively pristine settlement characterized by traditional courtyard housing at the city's centre, with the lake at its heart and Prag Mahal's tower punctuating a sea of rooftops. Compromises became inevitable as more and more people chose to migrate into the city, and as unscrupulous developers overrode all considerations of safety to build what would amount to incongruously scaled high-rises adjacent to older, traditional housing stock. The picture we are left with is of a quickly expanding city in the late 1970s and

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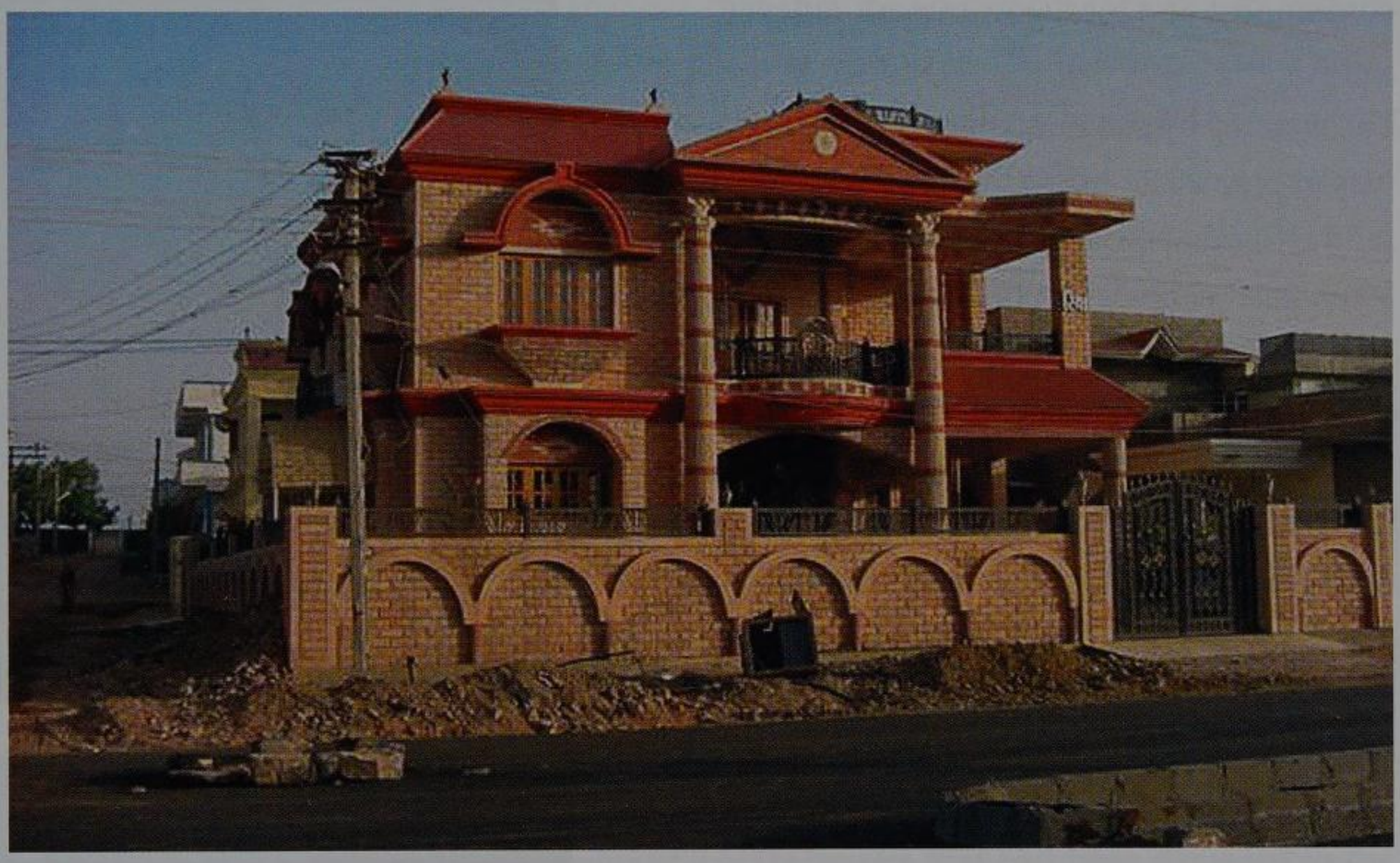
Facing page:
Above: Housing in Bhuj is beginning to acquire a "Punjabi Baroque" aesthetic, and may not in the long term encourage a sense of community.

Centre and below: A profusion of architectural kitsch has begun to proclaim the city not so much as a public collaboration between complementary interests, but more as a competition between the wealth of individuals.



early 1980s, where new housing developments had all but swallowed up remnants of the city's historic landmarks.

To reconstruct the city, therefore, town planners would have to technically, rationally, assert arguments that would ensure a modicum of safety to citizens living in an earthquake zone, while at the same time accommodating citizens' concerns. They would have to consult with a wide spectrum of "stakeholders", including citizens, financial and cultural institutions, developers, the business community, and local government officials.

The first step by planners, mandated by the GTPUDA, was to prepare an official "Draft Development Plan" for the city that would project the city's growth over a ten-year period (required by law) and propose measures to meet the opportunities and constraints of such growth.[82] Given the urgency of reconstruction, planners were asked by the government to capsule the planning process into a mere five months, unheard of for development plans elsewhere in the country where similar exercises can take up to eighteen months. To accelerate their work, planners proposed a three-part method in which they would (a) have to prepare an accurate map on which to

Above: The Dwarkadhish Temple on Uplipal Road, which dates to the early 18th century and whose elaborately carved stone door along its western facade dates possibly to the mid-19th century. The door features stylized relief sculpture that was recently demolished to allow the road adjoining the temple to be widened.

Below: Planners were faced with the difficult choice to either demolish the facade of an apartment building housing fifty families, or shave off the facade of a historic temple, in order to widen a road. The owner of the historic temple was at first hesitant, but eventually offered to have his property line cut so as to allow the families opposite to him to retain their properties. Such decision-making was often a matter of compromising between the personal and socially relevant value of things.

draw out schemes for new roads, the location of new neighbourhoods, open spaces, and public amenities; (b) collect vast amounts of information on different aspects of society in Bhuj; and (c) actually "design" a process by which planners might consult as directly as possible with local residents. The plan – essentially a policy document that would present proposals that could henceforth be pursued in greater detail – would emerge from a convergence of these three methods, including studies and analyses of pre-earthquake patterns of development, post-earthquake conditions, and a "vision statement" to guide policy-makers.

Planners' consultations with local communities in the Walled City alone revealed that a cross-section of people in the old core did not want to abstractly deliberate ideas for a new city because they simply could not imagine a reality drastically different from what they had known for generations. And so, local groups asked planners to prepare conceptual plans based upon their own studies and analyses that they could present formally to citizens for review and criticism. In doing so, town planners organized 158 meetings with a cross-section of society, talking, for example, to women's groups, the Bhuj Chamber of Commerce, industrialists from GIDC, senior citizens, and local government officials. A series of meetings were organized at the ward level, where large numbers of people from all eight wards in the walled city responded to presentations of the conceptual plan, and a workshop was organized for select representatives from the city (again, with various interests). These consultative exercises helped planners hone their knowledge of the complexities of city development, and to appreciate just how vulnerable some decisions were to local politics (see page 232).[83]

Planners found that preparing a "base" map (an accurate map on which they could depict all their proposals) was indeed a very difficult task, because forty-year-old land records were in many cases out of date and highly inaccurate in their representation of ground realities. However, as some planners laboured over the production of a good map, others began talking to local people about four major concerns that would decide the future shape of Bhuj: relocating the occupants of almost 17,000 houses that had been damaged in the earthquake; proposing economic measures to revive traditional markets and support the development of new markets in new areas; proposing measures to introduce new uses for land, and to streamline patterns of development in a more ordered manner; and viewing the earthquake as an opportunity to build better roads, sewerage and drainage lines, improving the city's water supply and providing more social amenities in areas of the city that were underprivileged and which had previously witnessed little proactive development.

Based upon these deliberations with citizens, planners were able to shape a policy document that would comprehensively describe priorities for different sectors of the economy, including, for example, developing land; resuscitating the economy; managing solid waste; conserving open spaces, water, and the environment; planning for the informal sector; encouraging the conservation of heritage and supporting tourism. This also included

Politicians and civic leaders discussed a conceptual development plan showing the walled city's land use zoning at the Rotary Club, Bhuj, in 2002.

rebuilding a "social" infrastructure through schools, hospitals and community facilities.[84] In particular, planners realized that the walled city's north and south portions presented very different pictures of development (the poorer north, where many buildings collapsed, now largely barren; and the wealthier south, where better-constructed buildings had withstood the earthquake and where streets remained relatively untouched), and that these would in future necessitate entirely different approaches to designing the character of streets and clusters of land.

The conceptual plan was presented to, and eventually officially adopted by, the Government of Gujarat, but in the process it became obvious that the walled city at Bhuj's core could not be analyzed at the same scale as areas surrounding this densely compacted, one-square-kilometre, maze of neighbourhoods and streets. In particular, any effort to redesign a network of streets would require either that planners widen existing roads (which would have done irreparable damage to commercial properties along market streets), or propose entirely new ones. To propose new streets, planners would have to recommend that parcels of land be acquired by the government, encouraging dissent amongst some property owners who cried foul at being denied their property at the expense of others. The question arose: How best could one practically rebuild a network of streets without compromising people's rights to equitable access and property value?

The Town Planning Scheme

Faced with such questions, planners proposed to the government that a new legal mechanism underscore the process of rebuilding the city's centre, and that this exercise for the historic walled city be treated as a separate project altogether. In this instance, the government decided to employ a legal instrument called the Town Planning Scheme – a set of procedures useful to equitably reorganizing parcels of land in larger cities elsewhere in Gujarat, usually at the periphery of settlements where land is quickly being developed – as a strategy to deal with the chaos at the city's historic centre.[85] The "Town Planning Scheme" strategy would prove conceptually flexible and procedurally viable, ensuring a measure of fairness in the process of assigning new uses to land. The mechanism, usually applied at the city's edge, could now be applied in a situation where the earthquake had rendered large tracts in the walled city open and empty.

Planners began by evaluating the opportunities and constraints in redesigning streets where traditional *falia*s had earlier been concentrated on more than 12,000 tiny, irregularly-shaped parcels of land. Surveyors concurrently mapped the intensity of damage to buildings that were in various stages of collapse, building a composite picture that would go towards three separate proposals for a new network of roads based upon the priorities of commerce and safety in the event of a future earthquake. Only the third of these three proposals for a road network would be adopted and predicate successive Town Planning Schemes.

A set of rationales was deliberated for such networking. In the first conceptual proposal, a set of ring- and radial roads was superimposed upon an existing street pattern where several buildings still remained upright, but citizens did not receive this proposal well. The proposal was revised such that the system of ring- and radial roads would now carefully "sit" on land cleared of rubble and open to development. In time, however, planners realized that such a realignment would do more to divide constituencies than to unite them, and so proposed a final solution in which a system of 9- and 12-metre roads loop inward from the walled city's periphery, connecting its edge with the city's major market streets, the Saraf, Danda and Vaniawad bazaars. This solution would decide the future complexion of neighbourhoods, in particular shielding market streets from heavy traffic. In the process, it became clear that the old street patterns that had characterized the walled city, prior to the earthquake, would have to change in order to accommodate entirely new concerns with safety and access, and that this fundamental rationale would force planners to temper their romanticism, favouring instead a more practical approach which could no longer afford – given the very real threat of future earthquakes – to refer nostalgically to the old streets (see pages 238–239).

Proposing a new network of streets, then, would have profound effects on the very conception of "neighbourhood" in the newly emerging city. If new streets framed new spaces, what kind of development should those spaces now house? And what of the historic

associations to those old streets that were being realigned? It appears, in hindsight, that the design of new streets would express a logic and rationale quite different from those of old ones, which had evolved over centuries and in response to the environmental conditions of another time. Talav Sheri or Vokla Falia (whose significance lay in their connection to water), or for that matter Ghodar Chowk (named for the royal stables located here), once took inspiration from local conditions which may not exist in the Bhuj of tomorrow, giving way to new nomenclatures whose rationales exist squarely in a sudden disaster and its shockingly unromantic priorities.

And could the *falia* survive? Early in the planning process, residents had voiced concerns about the possibility that a new road network would completely erase the distinctive character of old *falia*s, and by that erasure compromise the perceived essence of "traditional" living in Bhuj. The *falia*, as we saw in the first chapter illustration of Vora-saat-*no-delo*, was a creature of circumstance, which took shape in response to political and social currents of the time, in which neighbourhoods were tightly bound enclaves of caste and religion,

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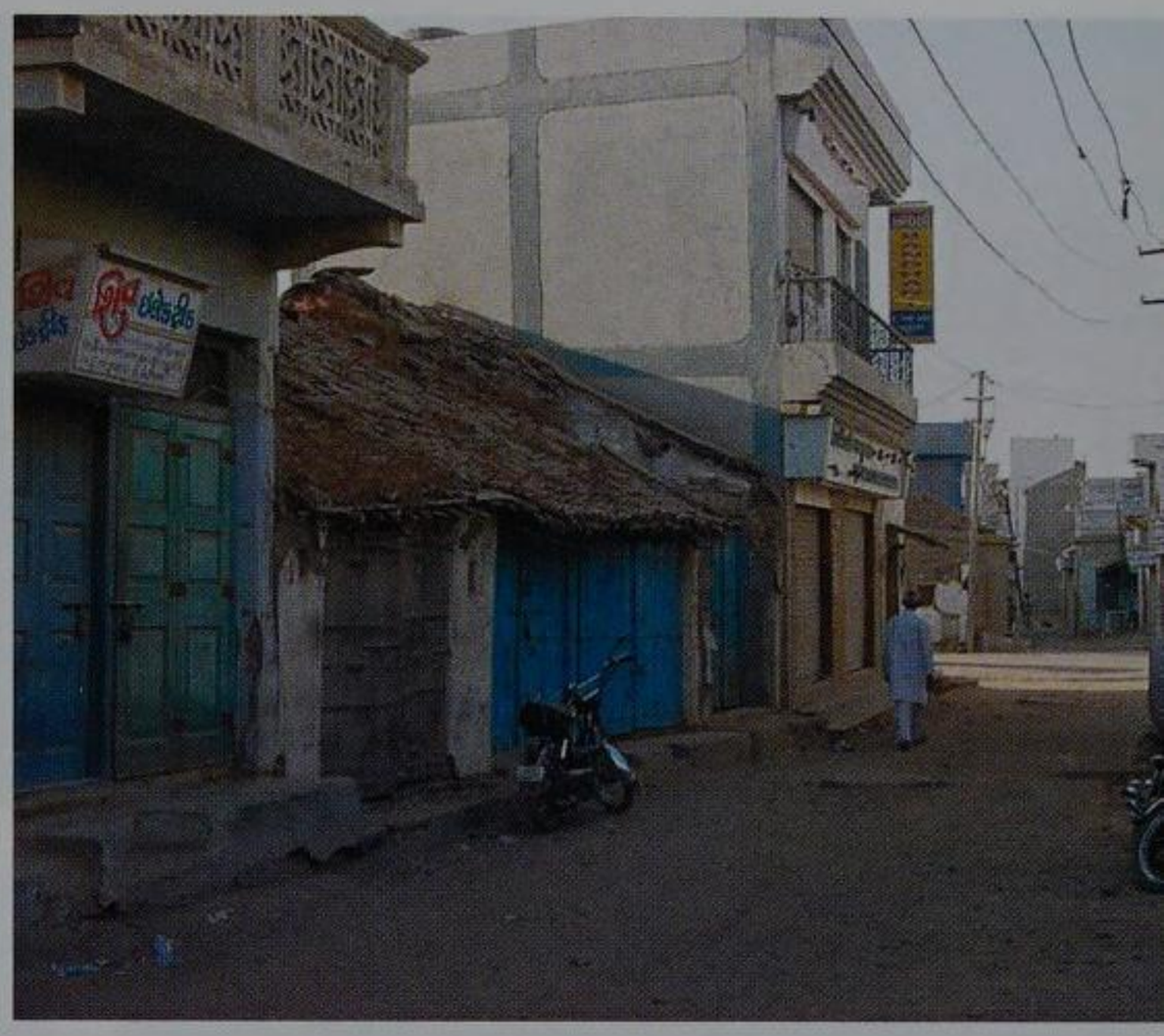
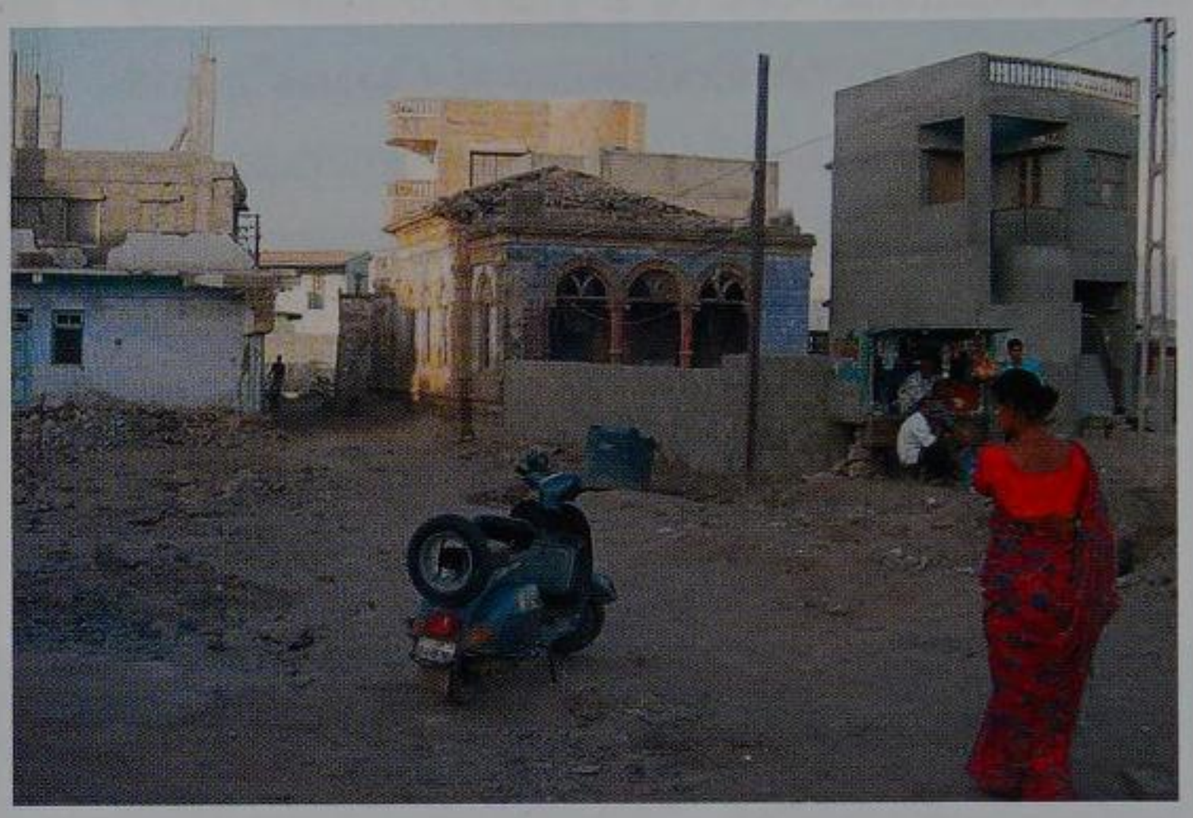
Network of streets, walled city, prior to town planning.

and where each *falia*'s social, commercial, or political reasons for being would have made a difference to the identities of *falia*s surrounding it. Over the centuries, several factors may have contributed to fragmenting Vora-Saat-*no-delo*'s unique identity: in particular, the advent of 19th-century industrialization which would have separated workplaces from the home, in effect encouraging people living in such *falia*s to seek new markets that would divorce them from their traditional ties to a guild or community profession (see "A Collaborative Canvas"); and the 20th-century phenomena of the motorcar



Above: An old shopfront in Bhuj, more than eighty years old, appears incongruously small compared to the adjacent development.

Below: Network of streets, walled city, after town planning.



Left: Laying a new road in Dalan, adjacent to Velvati *wandi* and Soniwad, along the perimeter of Darbargarh, 2004. Velvati *wandi* was named after the horsedrawn Victoria carriages that were once stored here.

Above right: Reconstructing roads in the walled city.

Below right: The Khoka Jamaat khana in Ravani Falia, close to Haroon Jewellers. The new road along its front now leads directly to Bhid Gate via the Sankadwala-*pir-ni-dargah*. While a few older buildings remain, there is little consistency in the character of development around them. This stems from the fact that current-day urban legislation does not address the larger possibilities of an 'urban design' for cities like Bhuj in India.

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and of telecommunications technology, which have jointly produced a diaspora of relatives and friends who realize that they no longer need to live together to be part of a group. In response to such currents, the nature of the *falia* must have changed considerably over a four-hundred year period, so that those old associations and dependencies between *falia*s now no longer remain important to the newly developing Bhuj. So, again, could – and should – the *falia* survive in its original configuration? Probably not, since change is inevitable, simply a matter of circumstance, and because the very rationales for neighbourliness have changed irrevocably over the ages and will continue to do so. Building a *falia* again as a replica of an old type would have no intrinsic meaning, and may become a largely cosmetic exercise. It is far more important to replicate the *falia*'s underlying values in future development and not its outer skin.

As private interests dictate the streetfront in the course of Bhuj's redevelopment, developments such as this throw aesthetic and functional caution to the winds. How can we foster a functional consistency and aesthetic dignity in the public face that our cities present?

It is this logic which underscores the rationale for a new neighbourhood form. Town Planning Schemes make no reference to the *falia* as something "special", and understandably so: theirs is an entirely different logic based upon the issue of equal opportunity and land rights, based upon an entirely different, very democratic, system of values. Preparing a "Town Planning Scheme" involves "reshaping" old parcels of land in an ordered manner so that each parcel has equitable access to roads and social amenities. A percentage of land is deducted from every property owner's parcel, so that each owner loses a proportional amount of land, but benefits fairly. In Bhuj, planners found it imperative to redraw an accurate property map of the city from old, highly inaccurate records, and to reorganize many plots in the walled city to make way for new roads and social amenities in places where none had previously existed (see pages 238–239). Experts sought to design the layout of completely new clusters of land for the northern half of the walled city, and for the southern portion proposed to retain the traditional curvatures of old streets yet open cul-de-sacs as future roots of escape. The issue presents a remarkably challenging study in how to "reconstitute" plots of land so that they break from convention without losing any of their intimate neighbourliness.

If town planning today is rooted in modern practicality rather than blind nostalgia, in what way would the history of Bhuj be important to the reconstruction process?

While Town Planning Schemes illustrate new rationales for development, Bhuj's future urban transformation will likely be the work of private developers to whom any discussion of "reclaiming" the "past" is bound to become a matter of tenuous, abstract debate, since the idea of recreating something from the past always raises questions concerning its authenticity, usefulness, cost, and practical management. It is one thing to study the morphology of traditional settlements; quite another to actually re-build them. Soon after the earthquake, for example, planners extensively documented 380 historic buildings, organizing and mapping them typologically. The exercise gave them an immediate reading of the morphology of Bhuj's streets, sponsoring composite images of an ideal, "traditional" neighbourhood ambitiously proposed for Jethi Sheri. It was immediately clear, however, that the Sheri's re-invention would prove a practical impossibility without support from financiers and local developers equipped with enough imagination to see the marketability of anything that would emerge from such documentation. The Development Plan for Bhuj proposed several

Reorganizing parcels of privately owned land in a Town Planning Scheme. The old pattern of properties appears as a mesh of green lines, while the new pattern of property boundaries is shown in red.

 Original plots of land before the Town Planning Scheme.

Left: A neighbourhood before a Town Planning Scheme was prepared for it.

Right: The same neighbourhood after a proposed Town Planning Scheme introduced new roads and reshaped property boundaries.

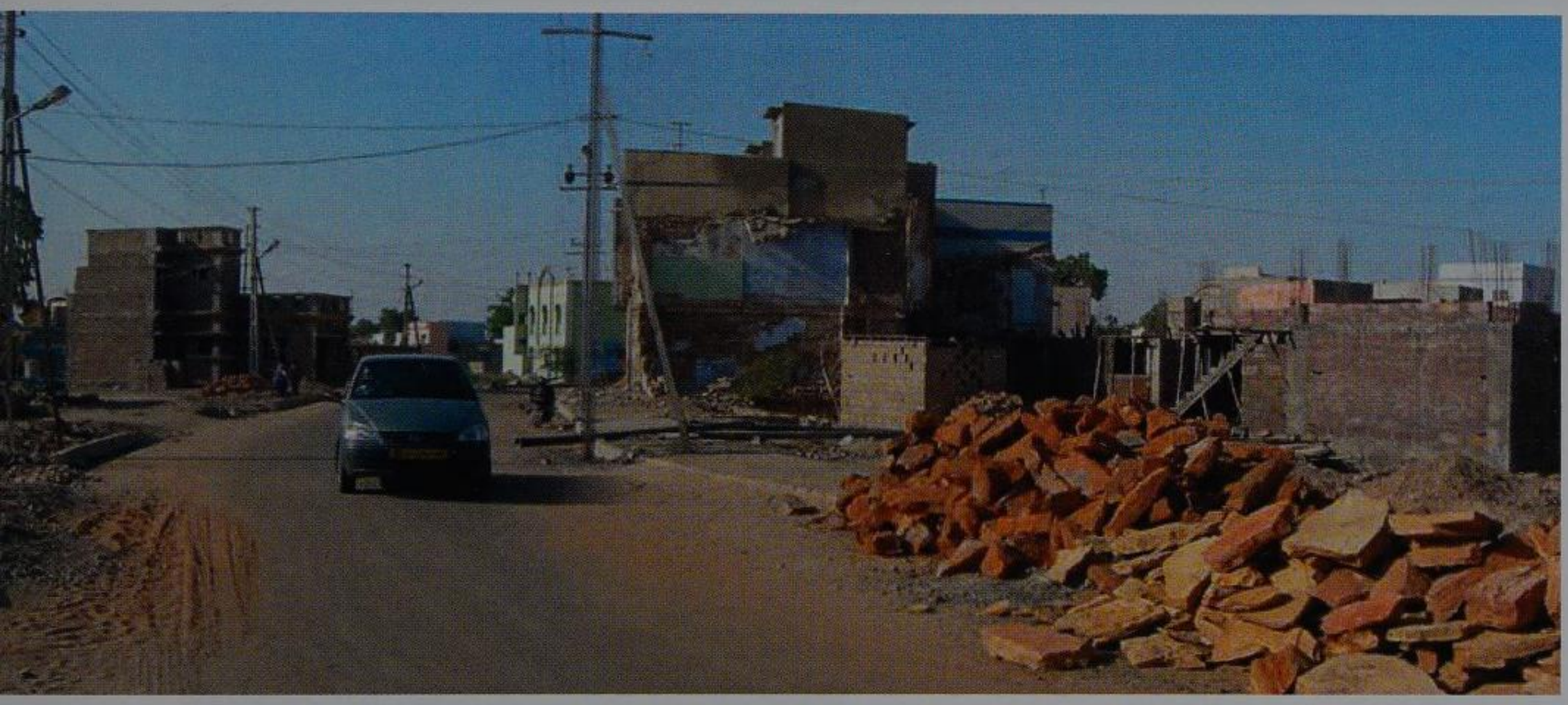
Final plots of land after the Town Planning Scheme.

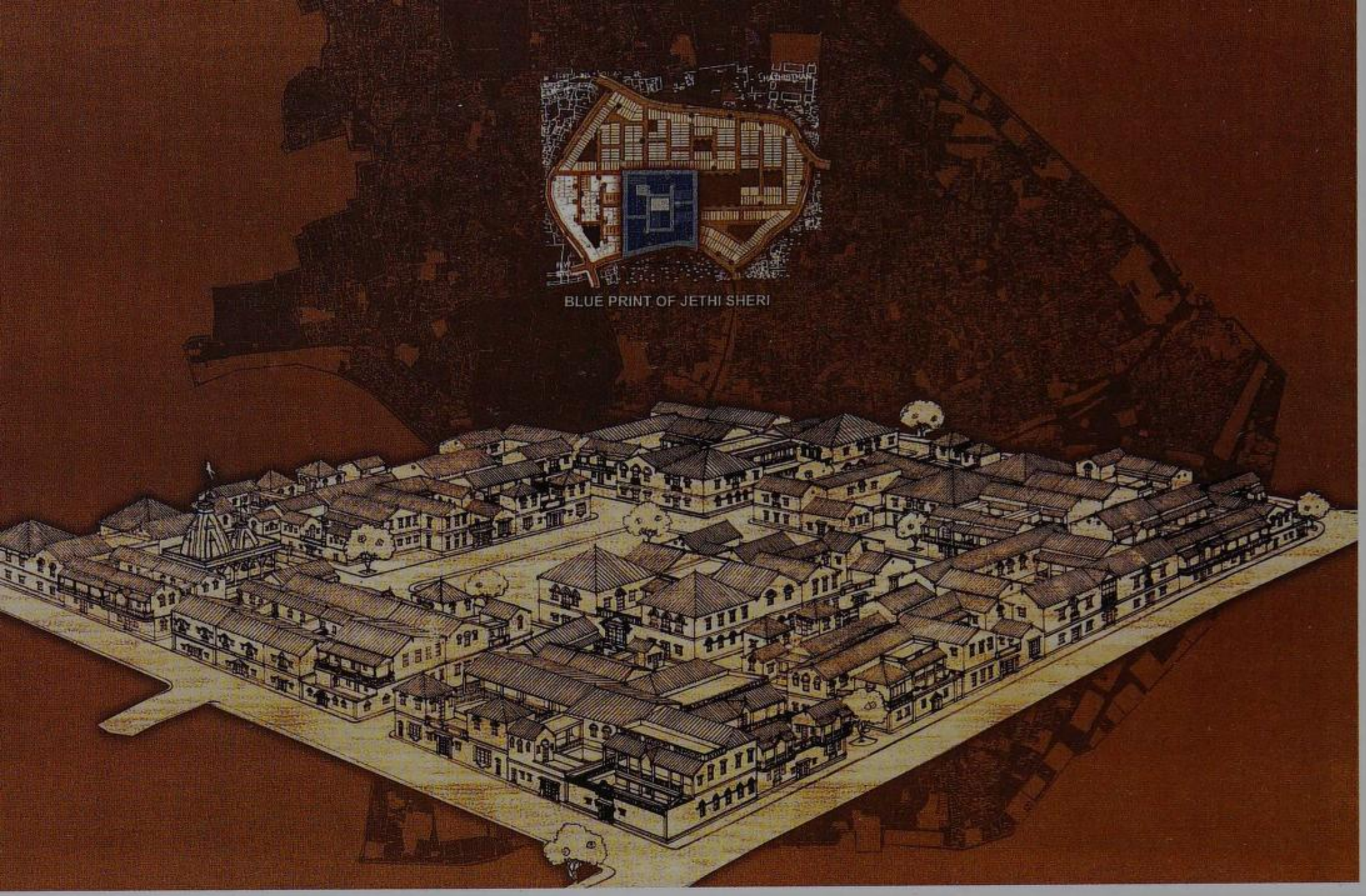
cultural development initiatives for the city, a process which accentuated the arbitrariness of qualifying and inscribing "importance" to places and things, simply for the fact that "culture" is difficult to define and value. This problem will require particular attention from the Gujarat State Government and NGOs interested in reviving the city's cultural institutions, since crass aggrandizement in the name of tourism might in future degenerate into the production of kitsch. In recent decades, particularly since India's liberalizing economy fuelled a private-sector tourism industry in the early 1990s, state governments have taken to promoting the re-creation of entire cultural landscapes as dramatic sets on which to stage the spectacle of local customs and rituals, to orchestrate craft markets, and to manufacture – for the consumer arriving from elsewhere – a carefully nurtured experience of the tasteful life.

Facing page:
Above: Soniwad, the most severely affected neighbourhood in the walled city, soon after rubble from streets had been cleared, 2002.

Centre: Paved roads in Soniwad, 2004.

Below: Redevelopment, Soniwad, 2004.





Above: A typological reconstruction of the ideal neighbourhood in the walled city, combining fives models of housing. CRUTA, Ahmedabad, undertook a hypothetical reconstruction of the character of the Jethi Sheri neighbourhood to explore the possibilities of tradition. In a realistic redevelopment scenario, such projections ultimately prove romantic and unrealistic because they cannot reflect the compulsions of a private-sector driven real estate market, 21st-century household needs, and new tastes.

Right: Selective conservation has no meaning if it encourages a pastiche of incongruous elements such as this door, which was saved in the process of removing debris from a property after the earthquake.

The Tourism Corporation of Gujarat Ltd. (TCGL)'s recent decision to focus attention in 2006 on developing tourism in Kachchh is encouraging and bodes well for Bhuj, but the city's landmarks and artifacts should not be commodified merely in the interests of generating revenue. Doing so will depreciate their everyday intimacy and meaning, something which no dispassionate government initiative could ever hope to successfully co-opt and stage. It would be crucial, as the city continues to redevelop, for local and state governments to work more in concert with citizens' groups, building institutions which receive healthy funding from government or the private sector, and which go much beyond merely staging a spectacle to nurturing local businesses and trade.

Above: A scheme to strengthen Bhuj's old network of water courses, 2003.

Below: Redeveloping a water canal, Bhuj, 2003.

Praveenbhai Shah (b.1935)

Oh, we had tremendous fun as teenagers in Bhuj. One popular joint was the Green Hotel on Saraf Bazaar for us, and there was another place, Lakhoobhai ni Hotel, just a little ahead of the Green Hotel. Lakhoobhai's son, Jaduram, the owner of the canteen at the ST Bus Stand today, has been a friend to me for 50-odd years. We used to gather there, at his 'hotel', at night, arriving between 7:30 and 8 pm, where we made a great show of sharing four cups of tea by making eight out of them -- because we were always clean broke.

There were all kinds of community festivities at the time…and you won't find many small details in today's festivities, because today's celebrations have become so commercial. *Garbi*s used to be performed with *naubat baazi* – in the same style that *naubat*s were drummed on top of the *nagaaro khana* outside the Darbargarh Chowk every morning at the crack of dawn in the days of the Maharaos – and at these *garbi*s Mataji's puja was always a particularly exciting occasion. You would see five types of *garbi* being performed in competing *falia*s; each *falia*'s *garbi* would aspire to be better than the other! Chowk Falia's *garbi* (near the Old Vegetable Market), would always be considered the best one, and I remember that it showcased – every year -- two male actors, dressed in women's clothing – the men called themselves *vesh* – who would be called to Bhuj from South Gujarat, from the *targhaada* community – and one of these actors' name was Pachaan, the senior one, and the other one was called Ganesh. It was considered a privilege to stand next to these actors; it was a matter of one's social status. Pachaan continued to come to Bhuj for about thirty years, and Ganesh for twenty. The occasion of the *garbi* was a good excuse for young men and young women to eye one another at close quarters, I think…

Did you know we had a *vyayamshala* -- a gymnasium – not far from the Dwarkanath Temple? There used to be a bandstand here. From around 1940 onwards, almost up until when Kachchh merged with the Indian Union, the Raja's administration sponsored a group of about fifteen Goan musicians. The team leader may possibly have been someone called D'Souza, but there was another very energetic person whom I clearly remember -- Diago. Now these Goan musicians were well-versed with modern musical instruments, including the bagpipes, because you see they had been very influenced by the Portuguese. Their lifestyle, eating habits, festivities were distinctly different from ours. But Diago used to speak Gujarati and Kachchhi so well. And of course they celebrated Christmas, and these musicians used to gather together and play music just as though they were small children in front of the house between the road leading from Nagar Chakla to Vaniawad, which I think belonged to Biharilal Antani (Niranjan's father), in the tailoring shop opposite the house. The most fascinating thing, though, was that they used to dance taking children into their embrace, which was beyond our conservative, cultural

imagination! People passing through used to stop and look askance at this strange group running around in circles, dancing and embracing each other. Diago was an excellent cyclist, and he used to cycle expertly along the very top of Hamirsar Lake's balustrade, all the way around, starting from Mahadev Gate right up to Krishnaji Bridge. He was the eighth wonder of the world!

I remember a funny story to when Madansinhji got married in 1931. The entire village had been invited to a feast, along with people from Madhapar. For them, of course, it was all "*dhua-bandh jamaade*" – in other words, nobody was expected to operate their *chulhas* (stoves) at home for the evening. Now at the feast, the food was cooked in huge copper cauldrons, including the *sheera* for a sweet. It so happened that the Royal Household underestimated its number of guests, and almost 2 to 2.5 tons of *sheera* went to waste. So then the question was: what to do with it all? The Maharao thought the only sensible thing to do would be to bury the *sheera en masse* in a large pit outside Bhid Gate. And that is exactly what they did. By the second day, the *sheera* had obviously spoiled underground, raising a stink which was so bad that it looked as though Bhuj would be threatened with something akin to the plague. And so they debated what to do with the *sheera* again. The Chief Health Officer advised that it be exhumed, divided up into batches, and disposed of elsewhere as waste. This cost the exchequer an extraordinary amount, which I imagine could very well have been given to the poor! But then, the monarchy was a bureaucracy of a wholly other sort…

I think the first so-called high-rise building in Bhuj was the one you'd see not far from Mahadev Gate, on Uplipal Road. It was probably the house of Vrajlalbhai Dholakia, whose brother, Manibhai Dholakia, would later become the Royal Family's advocate. And Manibhai's son, Bharatbhai Dholakia, is today Chief of the Rotary Club.

When the water filled the Hamirsar, prayers used to be offered with gold or silver coins; which would be thrown by the Raja into the lake. There were two men in particular who dove into the lake every year. One was called Bawa (a *khawas* or Jadeja), and the other Azad (who was Muslim). We called them "ghuss" because it took them a long time to re-surface. This was around 1951 to 1953.

We were a group of five, then, and when the lake filled up we would do a complete round (3-3.5 km) of the lake. There were water snakes, "bhaagus," a type of crocodile in it as well.

MODELLING AN INSTITUTION

In previous chapters, we considered how royal patronage had shaped the richness of Bhuj's art and architecture over four hundred years. But patronage in the 21th century takes the form of international grants from philanthropic societies and development aid foundations. Several craftspeople and performers in Bhuj and the larger region, who lost their livelihood to the earthquake of 2001, continue to depend upon grants from unseen sources for their income and markets for their skills. In this new world order, where global finance exerts tremendous influence on local institutions and the patron remains a distant abstraction, the craftsperson would stand to gain more from developing an institutional identity than if he represented himself – again, because in the world of 21st-century artistic patronage, the word "institution" commands a greater abstract legitimacy in the corridors of philanthropy than would the individual applicant. This chapter will discuss the importance of institutionalizing cultural development in Bhuj, both to legitimate individual artisans' and craftspeople's concerns as they recover their economic and social capital lost to the disaster, and to provoke a critical discourse in Bhuj on people's perceptions of how a city culture – its art and architecture – can collectively ride the tide of incessant change.

In the months immediately following the earthquake, when government policies for the reconstruction of cities were still unclear, planners began a series of conversations with residents to enumerate problems and find ways to help people in distress. These early conversations culminated in a list of projects to do largely with strengthening neighbourhood economy and documenting loss; projects such as organizing a market; helping *bandhani* tie-dye workers find shopkeepers willing to advertise their wares; converting a historic building into commercial office space to help stricken businesses; and developing a photographic archive of houses lost to the disaster.[86]

These were, however, at the time, incomplete ideas. NGOs, in those first few months, had been concentrating much of their energies on carrying out the work of rehabilitation in villages around Bhuj and places further afield in the region. Social workers were beginning to focus much of their efforts on accentuating the plight of poor craftspeople who had lost their workshops, looms, and markets to the earthquake. But such work remained confined to villages. By contrast, given the uncertainty of a comprehensive urban rehabilitation policy to guide social workers in cities and towns, there was absolutely no representation by NGOs in Bhuj, to begin with.[87]

Textile production apart, the performing arts received scant attention. Two modest experiments in the performing arts in villages and the city pointed to the tremendous potential in using the performing arts as a medium through which to record, and then analyse, a collective societal *angst*.

In the weeks following the earthquake, the Kachchh Nav Nirman Abhiyan and its regional arms ("Setus") had staged *lok dairas* in villages throughout Kachchh, transmitting and

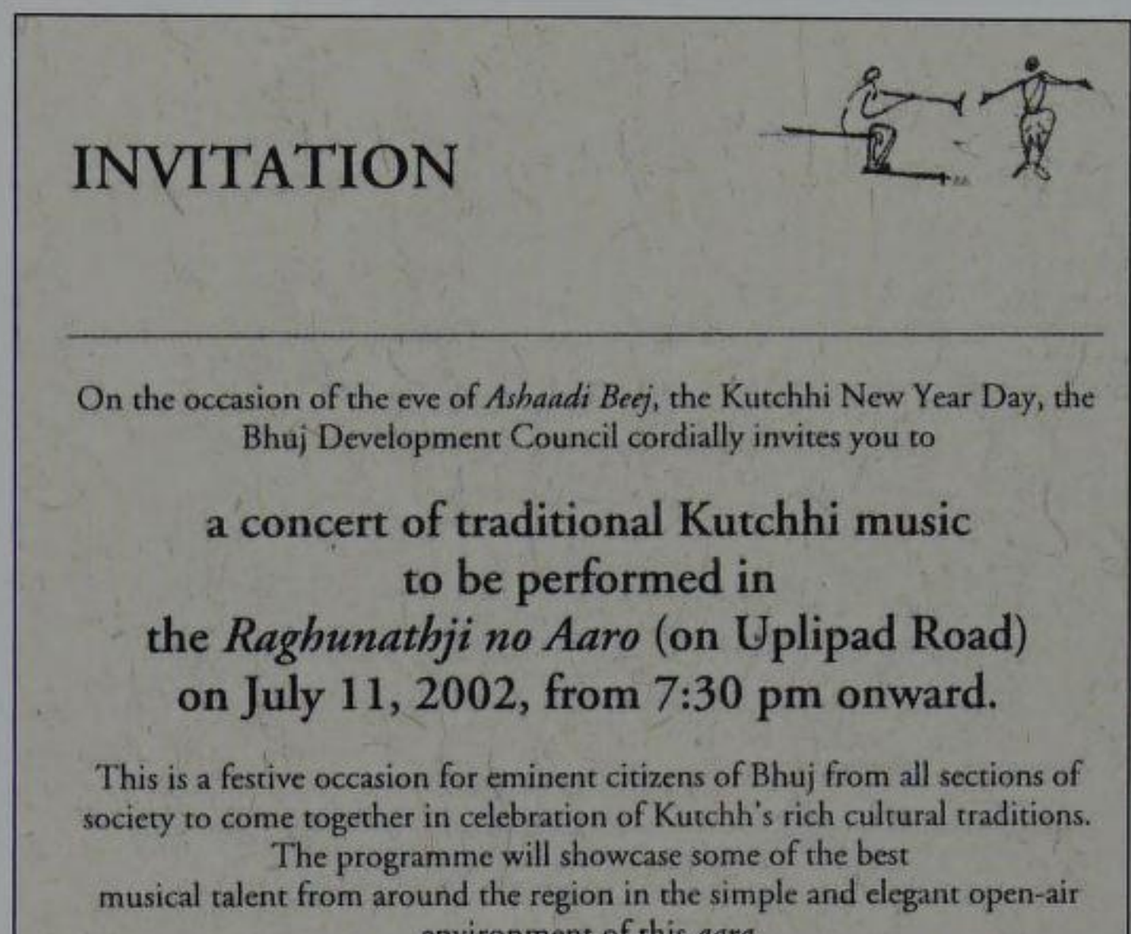
capturing, in verse, emotions difficult to put into words but more sensitively rendered in verse. In February 2001, KMVS began a series of radio broadcasts entitled *Tu Jiero Ai* (You Are Alive) as a public, cathartic platform for people to express their trauma, and where broadcasters could begin to reassure people round Kachchh about cultural places that had survived the earthquake. This second initiative evolved, in 2002, into *Kachchh Lok Jeevani*, a newsmagazine on the region's cultural history (which ran for a subsequent year), written in part as a travelogue recounting the sojourns of metaphorical characters named after geographical features in Kachchh, as they wandered around the region.

But, laudable as they were, these remained initiatives targeted largely to a diffuse, regional audience. Towns in Kachchh saw no comparable advocacy. What could government agencies potentially do to shepherd a cultural revival in cities, where there was arguably the greater challenge of accommodating diverse tastes? In 2002, I approached the Gujarat State Disaster Management Authority (GSDMA) about the possibility of matching a small grant from USAID's Financial Institutions Reform Expansion Programme in India (FIRE) to support a concert of traditional Kachchhi music in celebration of Asaadi Beej (Kachchhi New Year's Day) in Bhuj's Raghunaathji-*no-aaro*, a four-hundred-and-fifty-year-old space formed by a breach in the retaining wall to Hamirsar Lake. The concert was intended to represent a public affirmation of the resilience of art – tangible or intangible – after the earthquake; to foster a debate about standards in artistic excellence at a moment when several exponents of music had died in the disaster; and, more importantly, to somehow stimulate local, privately funded interest in imaginatively re-using the city's historic building as sites for performance, in partnership with the Municipality.

Small ambition, this, but several local organisations lent the initiative a hand; among them, the Bhuj Development Council; a group of voluntary citizens; the Sharad Bagh Trust; the Kachchh Mahila Vikas Sangathan; and officials from the Kutch Museum. Most significantly, the CEO of Bhuj's Municipality took interest as well, ordering that the *aaro* be swept clean of rubble and dirt and washed down by specially ordered tankers, and visiting the spot several times.

We were collectively inspired by the prospect of traditional music, played and sung by little-known musicians converging on Bhuj from distant places in the region, injecting new spirit into a flagging regional music industry and giving ordinary listeners, drawn from neighbourhoods around the *aaro*, a sense of the beauty of the region's musical genres. It was, more importantly, an instance of public and private agencies forming a partnership to fund the concert and to organize its logistics, something which the city had never before witnessed. The evening proved to be magical, with a medley of musicians playing from a classical and folk tradition which people in Bhuj ordinarily have little recourse to, and with the *aaro* taking on the air of a natural, open-air theatre (see pages 250–254).

The concert indirectly highlighted three things: one, that by virtue of their intangibility, the performing arts cannot easily be exported, and their markets and patrons remain mercurial, dictated, again, by the rules of sponsorship; second, that music, like dance, is one of the most vulnerable of all the arts, since it takes no physical form and so, were it to die out, would leave no physical traces, unlike architecture or textiles or literature. The prospect is frightening: an entire historical lineage, about which we have read in previous chapters, becomes extraordinarily vulnerable to the arbitrariness of cultural fashion. Finally, it was clear that the *aaro* itself could offer considerable opportunity to convert an otherwise staid, conventional space into a vibrant performance arena. This conversion might support the larger idea that it is precisely such places throughout Bhuj which merit preservation and sensitive development; and where public events can attract informal businesses whose commerce revolves around them.



INVITATION

On the occasion of the eve of *Ashaadi Beej*, the Kutchhi New Year Day, the Bhuj Development Council cordially invites you to

a concert of traditional Kutchhi music
to be performed in
the *Raghunathji no Aaro* (on Uplipad Road)
on July 11, 2002, from 7:30 pm onward.

This is a festive occasion for eminent citizens of Bhuj from all sections of society to come together in celebration of Kutchh's rich cultural traditions. The programme will showcase some of the best musical talent from around the region in the simple and elegant open-air environment of this *aara*.

We, the people of Bhuj, want to begin the new year in a spirit of peace, solidarity, and creative imagination. Such a concert has never before been organised in the historic *aara*, and it will be the first of several bold steps we will take to push for the redevelopment of our city's social, economic and arts institutions.
Come and share this imaginative enterprise with us, and usher in your new year in a spirit of peace and optimism.

This event is by invitation only. All invitees are requested to be present by 7:30 pm. Light refreshments will be available during the performance.

The event is being organised by the Bhuj Development Council with technical assistance from the EPC-USAID Initiative for Planned and Participatory Reconstruction.
The following organizations have kindly provided financial or technical assistance for the event:

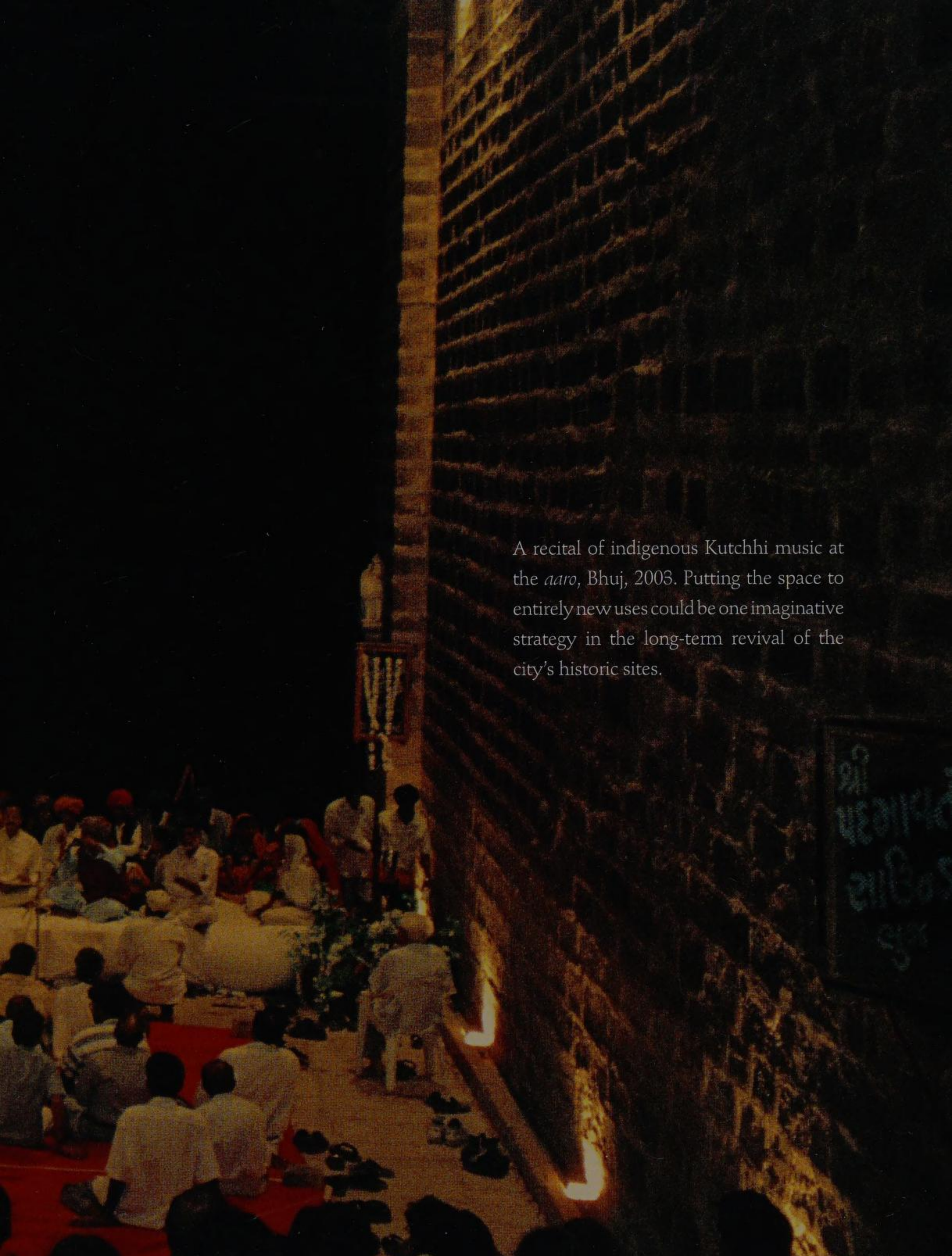
Bhuj Municipality
Gujarat State Disaster Management Authority
Kutch Mahila Vikas Sangathan
The Kutch Museum
Sharad Bagh Trust
EPC-USAID FIRE(D) Initiative for Planned and Participatory Reconstruction

The case for a cultural district

The concert, and its historic venue, stimulated a fair degree of public debate in mid-2002, so much so that it sponsored two subsequent ambitious proposals. One concerned the adaptation of several buildings adjacent to Patwadi Gate as a cultural centre in which historic buildings could be adapted to accommodate several uses; and another proposal to formally convene a group of citizens as a cultural forum for the city and its surrounding region (see page 257).

The Patwadi cluster of historic buildings, which defines roughly 10,000 square metres of a "precinct" immediately around Patwadi Gate, represents significant moments in the political evolution of Kachchh, as we have already witnessed in earlier chapters. Five historic buildings within Patwadi "Precinct" could be retrofitted and creatively adapted, such that the layout of their interiors suit new purposes, and will require less capital investment than if the structures were to be completely demolished and reconstructed. Such buildings could be transformed in order to accommodate a commercial sector badly affected by the earthquake and in need of urgent rehabilitation, and for training and production workshops in tie-and-dye printing, embroidery, pottery and other handicrafts. The buildings' conversion would help to bolster

Venue for a concert, a disused 450-year-old aaro leading down to the Hamirsar's bank. The *aara* was constructed by Maharao Godji in the late 17th century. There are rituals associated with this space. "If the monsoon waters are adequate, the waters start rising and people run to the Raghunaathji ledge at Pareshwar to see whether the waters will reach the Hamirsar's plumb line, marked by sculpted elephants on the *aara*'s walls to indicate the reservoir's limit. In the time of the Maharaos, up until 1948, the first news of the waters rising was relayed to the King, and the Royal Family would receive it with rituals from the shastras. Then a small company would start from the palace and float out on a raft. Commoners and dignitaries joined in. The royal priest conducted a prayer ceremony, offering coconut, rice and one *kori* to the waters. After the ritual was done, these things would be tied together into a bundle and flung from boats into the water. Commoners would be challenged to rescue the bundle before it reached the lake's bottom. Expert swimmers would dive into the waters to search for it. The diver who rescued the bundle was honoured by the king, and the day celebrated as the Meghotsav festival of rain. Schools and offices would be closed that day, and *megh laado* sweetmeats distributed. After Independence, Bhuj's Municipality continued to celebrate the festival and now offers *megh laadoo* to local politicians." From an interview with Umiyashankar Ajani, writer, Bhuj, 2001.



A recital of indigenous Kutchhi music at the *aaro*, Bhuj, 2003. Putting the space to entirely new uses could be one imaginative strategy in the long-term revival of the city's historic sites.

an image of a city with historic character. A well on Patwadi street, a local favourite for its sweet water, would also be restored.

Restoring such buildings could involve local masons and craftspeople in need of jobs. The centre could showcase Kachchhi crafts in all their variety, giving the visitor a sense of how these crafts have been produced for generations, imparting information on their cultural meanings, and offering craft for sale to people from Bhuj and visitors from elsewhere. While the government has in the past mooted suggestions for a separate handicraft market removed from the centre of town, the Patwadi precinct could illustrate the power and immediacy of showcasing handicraft in refurbished historic buildings.

If done well, the project could prove to set an ecological example to places elsewhere. An open plot of land against the lake where Patwadi School once stood, a 1920s building so severely damaged in the earthquake that it had to be demolished altogether, and the space it occupied is now large enough to be redeveloped, perhaps as a public, waterfront environmental park stretching from Patwadi Gate to the Bhoi-*varo-aaro* off Panch Hatdi. This redevelopment could be viewed as a long-term effort to reintroduce trees to the lakefront. Similar initiatives could bear fruit in the years to come, as priorities in development evolve from the immediate task of reinstating basic infrastructure to focusing on the usefulness of historic sites and their potential to be transformed.

The Patwadi precinct, transformed into a culturally vibrant space, could become a

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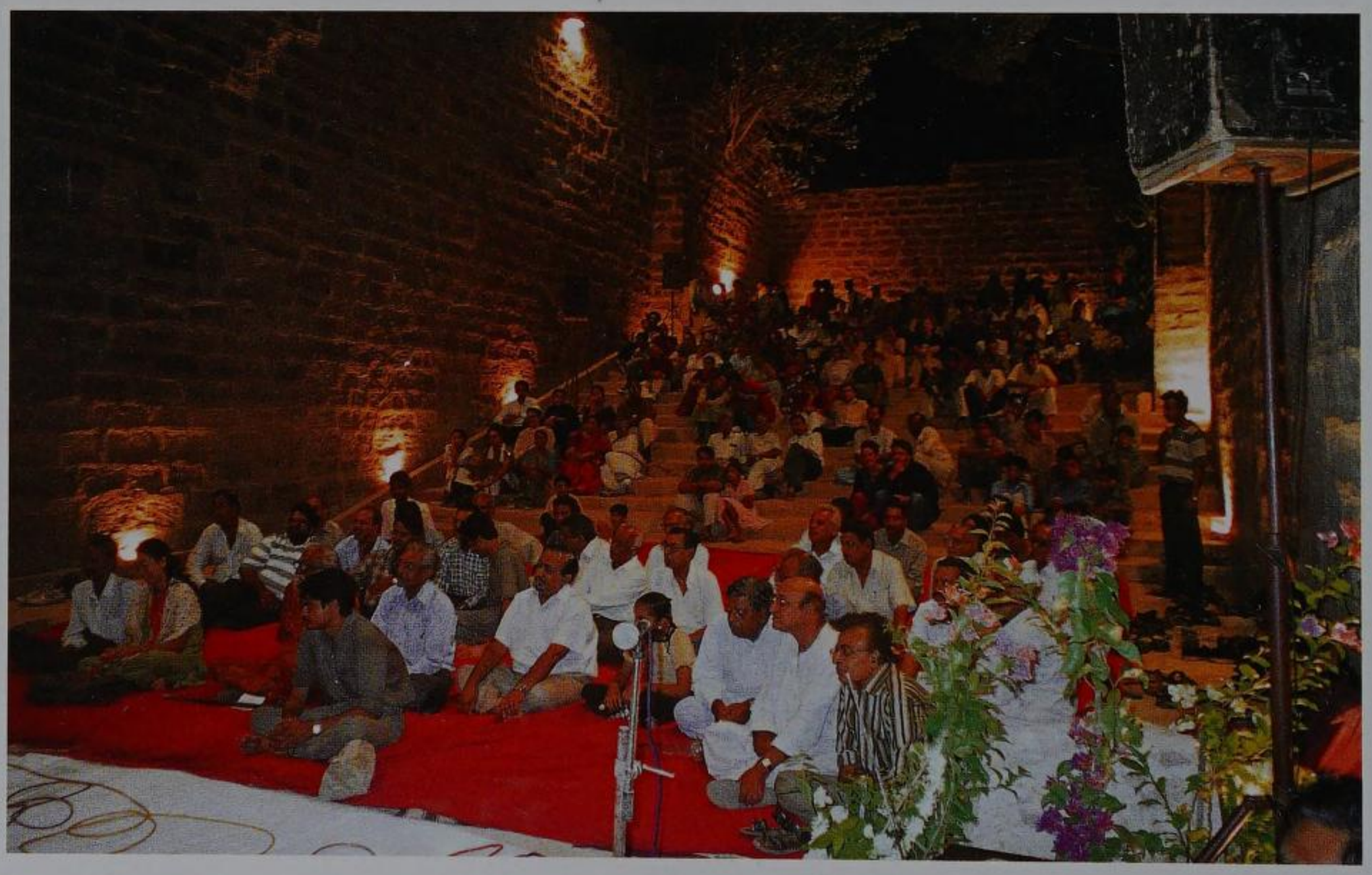
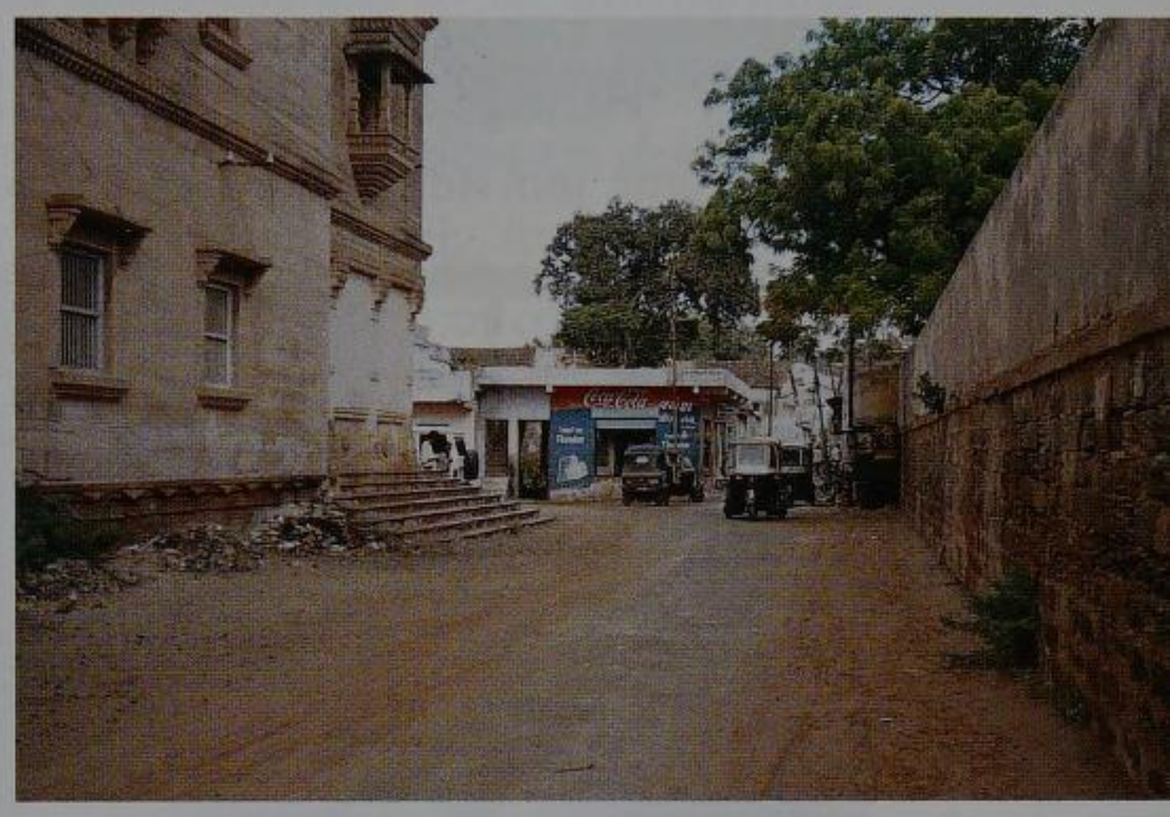
The concert at the *aaro*, Bhuj, 2003.



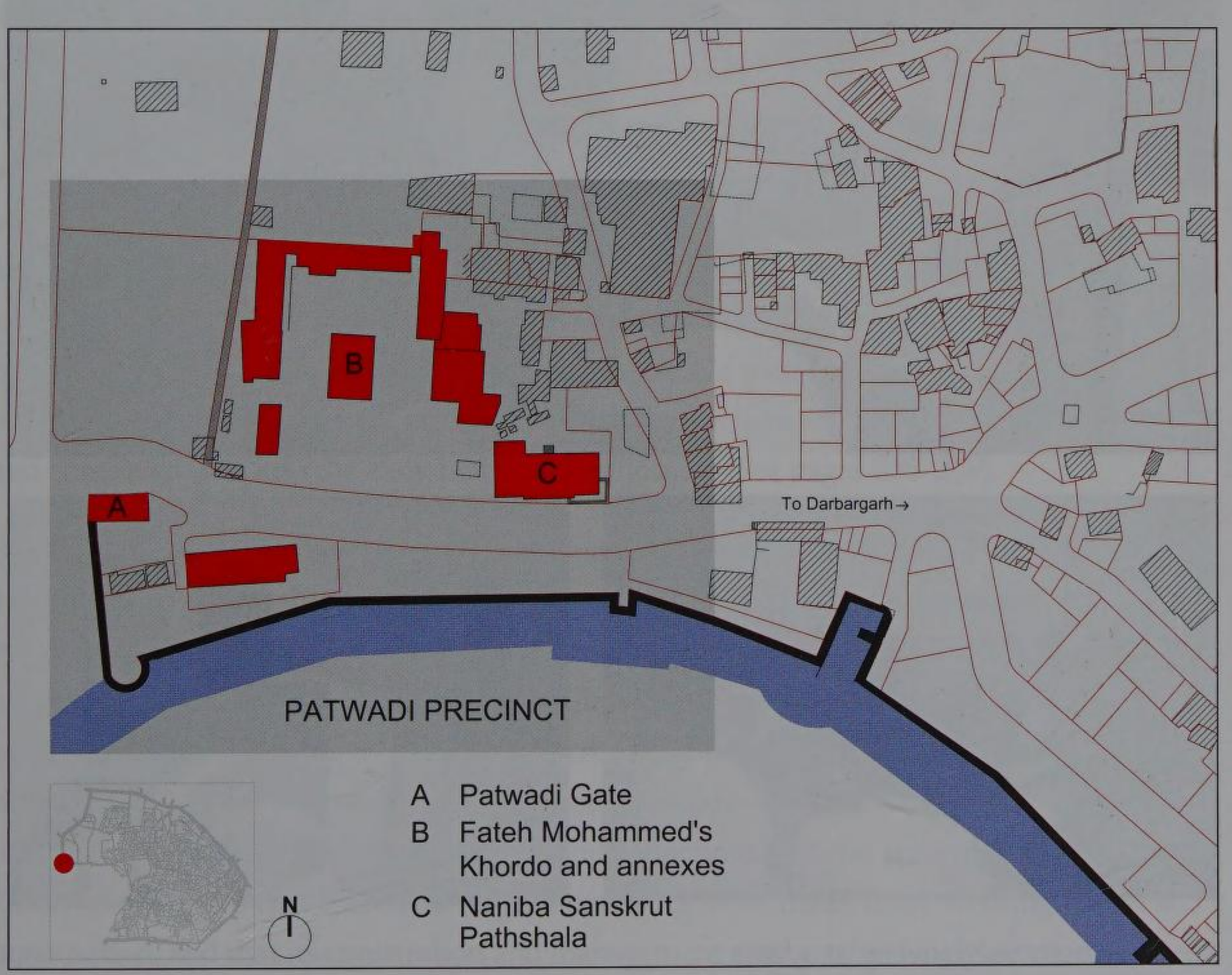
convenient summary of the Kachchi arts, promoted through taped walking tours and demonstrative activities. While Patwadi Street is converted on holidays into a pedestrian plaza, staging an open-air annual Kutchhi music festival, its buildings might take on more specific, and permanent, uses. The Fateh Mohammed-*no-Khordo*, for example, could accommodate a "living museum" replete with constumed actors impersonating regional historical and mythical figures, while the Naniba Sanskrut Pathshala, becomes a performing arts centre, complete with training academy and experimental theatre.

The State Government could appoint an organization or company (a "Special Purpose Vehicle", or SPV), specially incorporated under Section 25 of the Indian Companies Act of 1956, to oversee as "heritage manager" the course of the precinct's restoration. Since several properties in the area are publicly administered, the State Government might transfer assets in the area over to the SPV, endowing it with the authority to professionally hire local artisans,



Right: Patwadi Street a few months prior to the 2001 earthquake.

Below: The Patwadi Cultural District. A proposal, 2002.



conservation architects, infrastructure specialists, and legal experts for each building's interior conversion or restoration. Raising the project's development funds in the form of loans and grants from international and Indian foundations, government departments, and public contributions, the SPV could restore Patwadi's historic buildings in a matter of years. When complete, the precinct could be managed by a local cultural organization, while the buildings continue to be maintained by the SPV or its designate, which could raise a regular revenue for the area's upkeep by charging the local cultural organization a modest rent for every building. Over time, the SPV could hand the area's management completely over to the cultural organization, so that this intensely meaningful place, rich with local history, remains the preserve of a representative body of citizens.

An SPV "Heritage Manager" (either a professional, semi-autonomous institution, or charismatic individuals earmarked to become local, cultural initiatiors), will have to

Kutch Sanskruti Manch meeting, Bhuj, 2003.

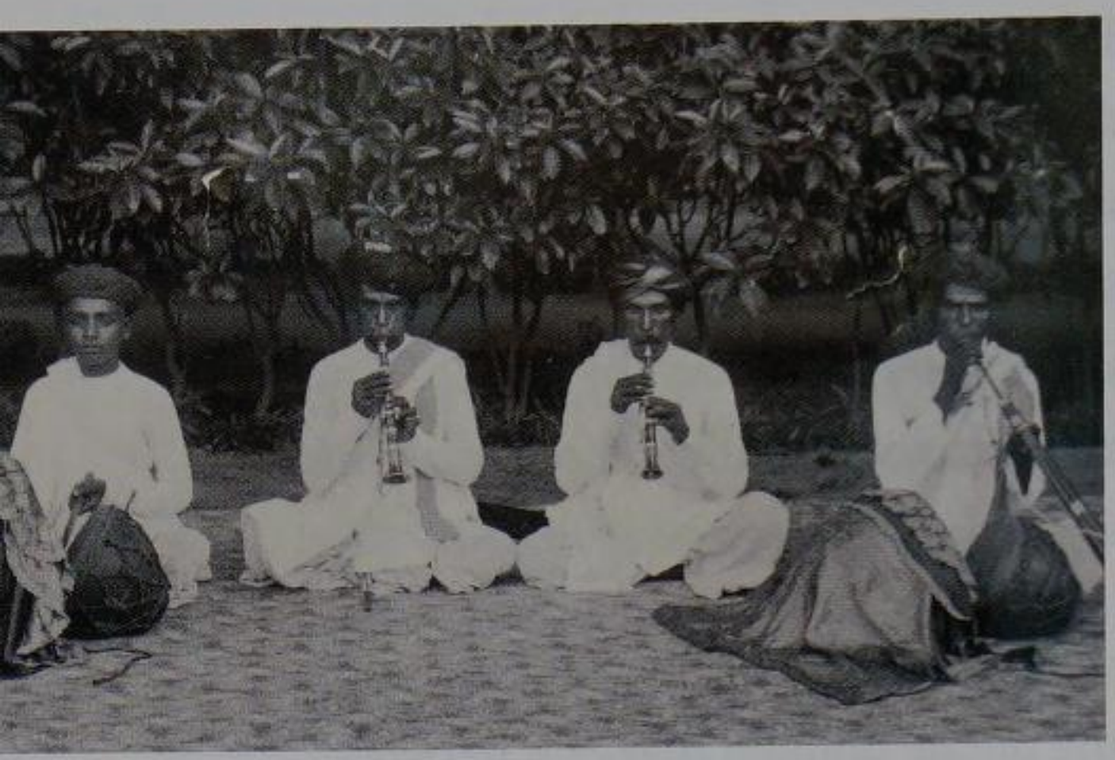
commit to overseeing Patwadi's transformation well beyond the mere restoration and conversion of its historic buildings. In this sense, the "Heritage Manager's" résumé should demand a basic competency in development management, with supplemental training in group facilitation, cultural programming and managing public relations. The "Heritage Manager" will remain, therefore, a constant presence supportive of local cultural groups, managing the buildings' maintenance, finances, and staff recruitment, but without dictating the terms of cultural production and performance.

Finally, what could such a project prove to residents, shopkeepers, government officials and tourists? First, that a restoration of select buildings in the public domain makes it perfectly possible to improve a dilapidated street by making subtle changes to its environment. Secondly, a project of this sort makes efficient use of public utilities, including water supply, public sewage, electricity, telephone and cable lines, so that basic services are *designed in tandem* with a restoration project, not as afterthoughts to it. And thirdly, that for visitors to appreciate Patwadi's historical setting, they will require a modicum of comfort. Better street lighting is possible, as are pavements *designed* aesthetically to include street furniture for the elderly and access to people with disabilities. Basic amenities might include signage that is easy to read, informative maps, public toilets that are properly managed, drinking water kiosks, and a cafeteria for the lunchtime visitor.

Challenges

Ideas for a cultural precinct apart, the concert at the *aaro* prompted residents in Bhuj and social activists at the Kachchh Nav Nirman Abhiyan to separately propose, in 2003, that a cultural forum be convened as an informal collaborative of artists, performers, funders, corporate agencies, and social workers. The Forum's mandate, decided early in our deliberations, would be to research artistic practice throughout the region, and organize events to present such work in Bhuj and its satellite towns. In much the same spirit as the concert at the *aaro*, the new Forum, now named the Kachchh Sanskruti Manch, began work in 2003 in Bhuj, organizing its first public event in June, 2003. A recital of traditional Kachchhi dances, staged in the Hamirsar's dry lake bed, reputedly attracted more than six thousand people from Bhuj, and continued well into the early hours of the morning (See pages 258–259).

But there are sobre lessons to be learned from such breathless idealism. First, the Forum's story remains sadly incomplete. In the years to come, the Kachchh Sanskruti Manch will require young talent in Bhuj – aspiring students of arts and management – to build such an organization into a creditable agency. It requires vision and daring from the next generation of cultural activists willing to spare their careers to the recording and exhibition of cultural practices that would otherwise recede without so much as a whimper into the background of Kachchh's history. It requires creative youth untainted by the trappings of globalizing kitsch to recognize that there is a respectable living to be made from working for an arts organisation, and that its constitution and management can be refreshingly modern.



Above left: A performance on the *sharanai* and *nagaara* at Sharad Bagh Palace, possibly 1940s. Judging from the style of their turbans, however, the performers seem not to be Kutchhi.

Above right: Performance of the Kutchhi *sharanai*, tabla and *dhol* at a Kutch Sanskruti Manch meeting in Ahmedabad, 2003.

Secondly, citizens must find a way to cement long-lasting relationships with Bhuj's Municipality, the Bhuj Area Development Authority (BHADA), and the Tourism and Culture departments of the State Government of Gujarat, if they are to see historic buildings transformed into things of use to the developing city. The reason for this is that it takes a progressive bureaucrat to promote a vision and to facilitate citizens' interactions with government; it is difficult, moreover, to expect officers of the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) to deliver promises when they are on temporary deputation to Kachchh, and the bureaucrat sensitive to concerns of heritage conservation is invariably rare. The most recent initiatives to restore Dedka-*vav* along the Hamirsar, the Alfred High School, Naniba Pathshala, and the Kutch Museum are the work of a District Collector with a penchant for saving historic buildings. But how many such officials exist? And how must people – ordinary people, including citizens – navigate the corridors of bureaucracy when pursuing long-term projects?

Left: Clearing the Hamirsar Lake for a dance recital organized by the Kutch Sanskruti Manch, 2003.

Right: Sodha Rajput dance recital, Bhuj, 2003.

Third, funds to restore and reuse historic buildings are plentifully available both in India and internationally, but must be doggedly sought. There are procedures to follow, and strategies to be clearly thought about in projecting how the money is to be used, and anticipating the benefits that such investments offer. To convert a historic building into something useful requires a great deal of thought: how will the building be used? Who could realistically set standards to manage it? How exactly should local people in Bhuj concern themselves with its restoration? Were ordinary citizens to assume charge of the structure, how much of its history becomes their moral imperative to know? And, finally, how does one prevent corruption in the course of redevelopment?

Fourth, this business of restoring a building is often a tussle between private interests and the public good. We are willing to see the Alfred High School restored to what it looked in the 1940s, but rarely take personal interest in its transformation and management: we hesitate at the prospect of interfering in matters that are not privately our own, and our apathy to historic buildings is perhaps due to the fact that we do not as yet see our local heritage as an economic instrument useful to the city.

Finally, if one really thinks about it, restoring Patwadi and its several cousins is clearly more a matter of governing Bhuj than the relatively simpler issue of conserving a material thing. The professional world of material conservation has always responded to developments in technology and science, but in India such advancements are inextricably tied to systems of governance, because making decisions about public buildings is still – fifty years after Independence, and even after economic reforms in 1991 – a public sector prerogative. To speak to government officials about the potential for change, citizens must (as mentioned earlier) represent themselves as collectives rather than individuals, for they stand a better chance in seeking funds and deciding how to shape the course of reinterpreting their city.

Left: Over six thousand people attend the dance recital, Bhuj, 2003.

Right: Kantibhai Shroff, Chairman, Excel Industries, and the Mayor of Bhuj present awards to performers at the dance recital in Hamirsar Lake, Bhuj, 2003.

EPILOGUE

This book was first intended to help Bhuj's residents come to terms with unfathomable loss after an earthquake. Four years after the city's bulldozers were silenced, my *mise en scène* (pages 114–115) now tempts us with larger questions about the relevance of such historical and ethnographic field research to decision-making for planning and civic action.

Such stories, pictures and criticism will serve as a reminder that there is profundity in even the most ordinary of information. For us to actually marshal such knowledge into a coherent argument, though, is no small challenge, and amounts to a degree of civic activism and collaborative research on public histories that is still rare in India. Yet, if this book alone could document a collaboration between organizations, ordinary residents and town planners, its analysis should certainly be possible in cities other than Bhuj. Disaster or no disaster, it could be possible to make such research applicable and useful to anyone who wants to use qualitative information imaginatively. Qualitative analysis would be crucial to describing the essence of culture and place, becoming an enormously powerful tool for urban development and civic engagement, provided that we understand how to treat it carefully, calibrating its values and eking out its economic logic.

And what is the economic logic to qualitative information research? In the private-sector race that has come to characterize 21st-century India's market for urban development, the architect and planner today are out to make faster, more concrete decisions at the expense of time and money. They would do well, therefore, to use tools such as ethnography for professional planning and environmental advocacy, seeing it as a long-term investment in making better proposals by mining bodies of local knowledge as the stock-in-trade of planning convention. As I mentioned in the Introduction to this book, skills in qualitative information research demand a special sensitivity to anything that is intangible and immeasurable but still valuable to us all. It demands an intellectual rigour quite different from, yet complementary to, standard demographic analysis.

What if architects and urban planners, then, were trained to spend more time with local residents, unconventionally researching and constructing critical portraits of the city even as they embark on statutory consultancies for government clients? Would it be a fanciful, expensive idea to expect planners to behave more like anthropologists in the field? Could their qualitative analysis of information significantly influence the course of decision-making, above and beyond the limits to their formal consultative meetings with "stakeholders"? Could their immersion in the field save state and local governments costly investments in infrastructure proposals and mounting consultancy fees spent on third-party "data-gathering"? As governments invest large sums in feasibility studies for urban development, what exactly is the opportunity cost of an eye-opening ethnography to financiers sponsoring urban redevelopment?

In one sense, we could say that planning the reconstruction of Bhuj is rather akin to the challenge of writing a good story. We must first ask imaginative questions to lead our investigation, and then shape a logical scenario around our inquiry. The more probing our questions, the more information we will obtain; and consequently the more nuanced our perception will become. The story we construct will hinge upon the quality and range of the people who express ideas, and this selectiveness will pay off in terms of the quality and range of ideas we collect. So it is really a matter of finding the right people, and then asking them the right questions. But to do all of this, we need time, and a highly organized approach.

As we saw in "The City Resculpted", development planning in Bhuj has required urban planners to consult with a wide spectrum of people who hold a stake in the city's development. The process is mandated by the Gujarat Town Planning and Urban Development Act, to aid planners in re-organizing urban land and planning a network of roads. Planning officials are required to solicit public "opinions and suggestions," refining their ideas and proposals in response to public reaction.[88] A draft development plan for Bhuj, for example, took little more than five months to prepare, quite unusual for a statutory process which would ordinarily have taken more than a year. In the flurry of activity, planners could collect only a limited amount of information, much of it a compilation of secondary, quantitative, data; or they could only distill a set of generalized conclusions from a limited number of meetings with communities of people.

The problem of selecting people to talk to stems from systemic limitations inherent in the design of current-day state urban legislation, which mandates a period of time in which all planning supported by governments must be completed. The imposition of time invariably limits the methods a planner will use to acquire his information in the field. In the conventional scenario, choices in decision-making may first have to be anticipated by planners, so that ideas originate first from them to be vetted by people they consult with, again in an effort to save time (in other words, developing a theory or proposition to be tested in the field). This limits the open-ended possibilities of questions the planner might ask of people.

Another limitation the planner faces, particularly when planning the reconstruction of a city after a disaster, is in having to answer to urgent needs at short notice, this pressure often exerted at the behest of governments who have to issue contracts that are bound by time limits within which a planner must obtain his data in the field. In the hurry to pin-point the root of a problem, the planner may ignore ideas which may at first seem inconsequential to an analysis but prove later to be pieces crucial to a puzzle. This limits the possibility of including data supportive to a thought or idea at the right time.

A third limitation the planner faces, particularly after a disaster, is in orchestrating a large number of consultations very quickly, and often in a climate of clinical formality,

statistically narrowing his universe of respondents. This limits the number of people he will meet in the field.

What we need, therefore, especially after a disaster of the magnitude of Bhuj's, is a system of empirical enquiry that could ensure that information obtained is urgent, topical and substantive, perhaps drawing directly from citizens more than what is otherwise assumed to be 'enough' data. The linchpin for an empirical method must be ethnography, and this should be carried out as part of a planner's contractual obligation to his client, be it a government department or an NGO involved in reconstruction planning. Well-designed ethnography, done in a manner where architects and planners spend a quantum of time in the field after a disaster, will yield better proposals than if such professionals were to attempt a hasty analysis whose data is riddled with ellipses. Well-designed ethnography *does not* require that development legislation be altered; what it *does* require is that development contracts be better structured to make empirical fieldwork an essential activity. Well-designed ethnography, moreover, may yield a comparative savings in investment to client governments and development aid donors if planners were to be "embedded" in the field and given time to shape proposals that are both analytically incisive and sensitive to the project of change.

S I N D

A

SKETCH

of the

RUNN

and Countries adjacent

to illustrate a

Memoir on its formation, and

the alterations of the

Eastern Branch of the Indus,

by

Lieut. Burnes, Asst. Qr. Mr. Gen.l.

The Jattee.

The Grand

Little

The Bunnee a tract of Grass-land

BHOOJ.

GULF OF

Wanga

Bund

Meer Thurra ka Tanda

Mora Bund.

Phurraun River.

Churail.

Chuteelur Bund.

Dulleka Wussee.

Ally Bunder.

Ballyaree

Raomaka Bazar.

Khanjeka kot.

Veegogud.

Vingur.

Old Bund

Ullah Bund

Thrown up by the Earthquake of 1819

Sindree.

Busta Bunder

Korree or Eastern Mouth of the Indus

Kotree

Sundo.

Chungasir

Lucput.

Ruins

Pir

Daidree.

Jurra

Capooraseo.

Kuttiu

Jumara.

Korah.

Nuro

Godauder.

Sundrow.

Goer.

Mhurr.

Beerindu

Saurun

Ghurance.

Charee

Kara Rajsuns

Tyarro

Jeebur.

Nerana

Joarea.

Bepar.

Hatiu

Bair

Ramwarra

Badra

Goontree

Mhorodur

Jogee Arrud

Oomrasee

Boomrasee

Dhoro

Wauchur.

Eggra.

Bostia

Koombroo

Mutlul.

Lackerweera

Nuckutrana

M. Buckordeah

Jerodur

Hummowlee

Budlee.

Angia.

Mucksa

Narappa.

Tayrah

Mulliah

Bara Chree

Ruder

Juckow

Ward.

Mboiara.

Roha.

Ruins

Muckwara

Calianpoor.

Mankoor.

Camp.

Sindoree

Kotara.

Kotra

Dunnaw.

Mujjul

Rapoor

Koorbye.

Narainpoor.

Rheeah.

Corpoor.

Khaira

Chiccar

Warlee.

Ninjan.

Seeragud

Soothree.

Kotra.

Mhow.

Saubrye.

Meigpoor.

Gudjor.

Bundra.

Koora

Sandan

Chuchee.

Bhadye.

Poohree

Beraja

Lippra.

Bannye

Bhait.

Doon.

Asambia.

Lakja.

Tunnaugha

Phirraudee.

Ruttalia

Chuchee

Sirwa.

Bidree.

Veerania

Ch. Leya

Mandivee.

Goondeedree.

Moondra.

Toonee.

Toonda

Jirpoora.

Back Water.

To Ghuree.

Coverd with Water since the Earthquake of 1819.

Meer Nuseer

23.

4.

Nueyur.

Parkur.

Loonee River.

Boyatra.

Joriallee.

Mouth of the Loonee

Seldom passable.

Balwuntree.

Nuggur.

Choorial

Wurr.

Wow.

Marka.

Nurra Bale.

Kanolee.

Teelgaum.

Dunnaura.

ed original course of the Loonee River.

Sooelgaum.

Beynup.

Mussaulee.

Dirsanee.

24

Khureer.

Dourauweara.

Cuddra

Bhagla

Modanu.

Balasir.

Jattawara

Charungong

Patunglee.

Dookurwarra.

Bajbra.

Rahdinpoor.

Vowa

Bokoolra

Sudadpoora

Satone.

Santulpoor.

Warye.

Portal Singswan.

Rattenda

Bara Beer.

Gangta.

Laukrea

Dalsulpoor

Geeret

Futtihgud.

Modufra.

Daoree.

Patunkee.

Mord.

Rojee

Peeprolla

The Bunass River.

Hardyness.

Mouth of the Bunass.

Qomia

Sunyak

Vooee.

Borroria.

Rhapoor.

Soondah

Choubaree.

Munsaria.

Kuntcote.

Badurgud.

Naunda

Sugpoor.

Bundree.

Rampoor.

Addooa

Cheetrore.

Pakinsir.

Pitchpasir

Baree.

Khoombareea.

Laukreea.

Butchow.

Kuttaria.

Rextooree.

Chawalla

Wandeeah.

Surposed original course of the Bunass River.

RUNN.

Mentioned by Abul Fuzzul.

Verasir.

Teekur.

Koombreea.

Tedlao

Malia.

Wuwawuna Bunder.

Moreree.

Jooria.

Kattywar.

Scale in British Miles.

NOTES

1 See, for example, R. Mehrotra and S. Dwivedi, *Bombay. The Cities Within*, Mumbai, 1995; J. Diddee and S. Gupta, *Pune: queen of the Deccan*, Pune, 2000; and S. Mehta, *Maximum City. Bombay Lost and Found*, New York, 2004.

2 See, for example, R. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*, New York, 2000, in which the author analyzes a host of problems to do with civic engagement in America. Based upon formidable quantitative and qualitative research, it draws from thousands of interviews with people. Putnam's thesis is that "social capital" consists of networks, associations, group thinking, and residual memory, all of which go toward giving communities their specific identities, and which are disappearing from the contemporary American society.

3 The Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH), for example, employs anthropologists to support the work of conservation architects documenting historic architecture. The agency's thinking is laudatory, and parallels approaches to conservation practice in the west, where the ethnographic method has now become standard conservation practice.

4 The social scientist has, conceptually speaking, yet to insert her agenda into a national framework of urban development legislation. Participant-observation is not mandated by law, so community-level participant observation is only a methodological adjunct to mainstream, top-down physical surveys, and lacks legal sanction.

5 Current-day architects and amateur historians in Bhuj have done considerable fieldwork to look closely at current-day patterns of housing and neighbourhood development in Bhuj with a view to creatively fusing architectural evidence with some commonsensical speculation about the evolution of city streets and the genealogy of Bhuj's communities. The outcome makes for a fascinating picture, but it remains speculative at best. I have had to piece together several fragmentary ideas, using a combination of primary and secondary evidence to write this chapter. A large portion of this chapter has been culled from writing contributed by knowledgeable amateur historians in Bhuj, viz. Umiyashankar Ajani, Pramod Jethi, Naresh Antani, Rahamtulla Jamadar, Dilip Vaidya, Praveen Shah, and Haresh Dholakia; and I have supplemented this writing with discussions and interviews with KS Dilipsinhji, MKS Himmatsinhji, Umiyashankar Ajani, Kiran Vaghela, Jamiyatbhai Vora, Dinmanirai Vora, Pramod Jethi, and Prabodh Mankad; a primary analysis of photographs available in the collections of the British Library, London, the Sharad Bagh and Aina Mahal collections, and the MKS Godji collection; and, through contributors' writing, translations of passages from local secondary sources, including: R. Rathore, *Kachchh nu Sanskruti Darshan*, Ahmedabad, 1959; A.K. Dwivedi, *Kachchh Desh no Itihaas* 20th ed., Mumbai, 1976; S. Gadhvi, *Kachchh Darshan*, Bhuj, 1978; and KS Dilipsinhji, *Kutch in festival and custom*, New Delhi, 2004.

6 Interviews with KS Dilipsinhji of Kutch, Mumbai, 2004. The Rao's quest for a suitable central site at which to establish a new capital brought him to Bhujiyo Hill, considered in popular legend to be the abode of the serpent king Bhujang. Nearby was a small tank, Hamir-rai, used by a shepherd, Hamir, as a watering hole for his animals. Khengarji is reputed here to have seen a hare confront a dog, and to have been inspired to build a capital at the spot. This is where he drove a peg into the soil to symbolically found Bhuj in 1549. The peg still exists, and the town's horoscope –which commemorates the event – was stored at the Moti Poshal close to Saraf Bazaar prior to the earthquake. For details on stories of Bhuj's founding, see A. Keshavji Dwivedi, *Kachchh Desh no Itihas* (1876), pp. 31 and 37; R. Rathod, *Kachchh nu Sanskruti Darshan*, 1959, p.199; and D. Karani, *Kachchh Kaladhar*, vol. 2, pp. 272–273.

7 Khengarji obtained military help from Sultan Mehmud Beghda of Ahmedabad in return for saving his life in an attack from a wounded lion. He was also able to get his permission to annex Morvi from the Sultan's *satrap* Nawabkhan Ghori, as a first step in reconquering his late father Hamirji's domain in Kutch from the clutches of his uncle Jam Raval who had conquered it on treacherously killing Jam Raval. After conquering Morvi and consolidating his hold, Khengarji next attacked Sapar in eastern Kutch and liberated it from its ruler, Jam Abda. Khengarji was then ceremoniously anointed ruler of Sapar, and changed its name to Rapar to reflect his new status as Rao. Many chieftains favourably inclined towards Jam Hamirji joined Khengarji, swelling the ranks of his armies. The ambitious Rao then conquered Anjar, and again anointed himself its

ruler. Jam Raval is reputed to have taken fright at this, and fled to Halar without resistence, eventually establishing his capital at Jamnagar. Khengarji could then capture his father's capital Lakhiarviro and Jam Raval's capital Bara, and formally ascend his father's throne in 1534, consolidating all of Kutch under his rule. This account is available in several local secondary sources, including A. Keshavji Dwivedi, op. cit., pp. 30–31, 34–35; R. Rathod, op.cit, p. 51; N. M. Joshi, *Bhatigar Bhomka Kachchh*, p.163; and D. Karani, op. cit., pp. 273–277.

8 A stone inscription on the Trikamrai Temple mentions the date Samvat 1418 (1362 CE), although it is unclear as to whether this is conclusively its date of construction. See K. Antani, *Kachchh Parichay Prakashan, Bhuj Taluko*, 1st ed., Bhuj, 1982, p. 9, for a description of this and the Shiromani Rai temple.

9 The idea was first elaborated in a speculative essay by Haresh Dholakia, Bhuj, in 2000.

10 Ibid.

11 H. Dholakia, op. cit.

12 The speculative ideas here stem from my conversations with Pramod Jethi, in August 2002, and with Kiran Vaghela, in July 2003.

13 From visits to select neighbourhoods in Bhuj's walled city and interviews with architect Kiran Vaghela, Bhuj, July 2003.

14 The Siddi African community is said to have descended from earlier soldier recruits who may have arrived first either as soldiers acquired by Khengarji I from Mahmud Begda's regiments, or who landed in Mandvi and Mundra as shipmen or servants of Bhatia, Khoja, Lohana and Bhadala families in the 17th and 18th centuries. Their precise origin is difficult to ascertain, however, and must be placed within a larger scholarship on the cultural history of the Siddis in India in general. See, for example, Harris, J.E., "Africans in Indian History," paper presented at the University of Nairobi Department of History Staff Seminar, October 4th, 1972; V. D.Rao, "The Habshis: India's Unknown Africans," *Africa Report*, September–October 1973, pp.35–38; and K. Robbins and J. McLeod, *African Elites in India: Habshi Amarat*, Ahmedabad, 2006.

15 Interview with KS Dilipsinhji, Mumbai, November 2004.

16 Discussions with members of the *salaat* community in Bhuj and Mandvi, including Shivlalbhai Odhvani, Narrotambhai Khetani, Girishbhai Pranlal, April 2003. See also "A Collaborative Canvas" for a discussion of the *salaat* construction process.

17 Interview with Pramod Jethi, November 2003. The story goes that there were problems in constructing the Alamgarh near Patwadi Gate, and to appease the king the Muslim saint Laghasha Pir sacrificially offered his head to sanctify the area. His successors were presented with the village of Sumrasar, in return for this sacrifice. Even today, the village is known as Sumrasar Sheikh, and the *pir* is still venerated in the Patwadi area with a *dargah* to his name.

18 c.f. KS Dilipsinhji, *Kutch in festival and custom*, op. cit., pp. 11, 24; and J. Antani, ed., *Kachchh ni tavarikh*, 1991, p. 25.

19 c.f. S. Gadhvi, *Kachchh Darshan*, p. 129.

20 c.f. P Jethi and C. London, 'A Glorious Heritage: Maharao Lakhpatji and the Aina Mahal,' in *The Arts of Kutch*, pp. 48–61.

21 Known as the battle of Zhara or Jhara, in which Sultan Ghulam Shah Kalora attacked Kutch with a reputed force of seventy to eighty thousand men. The battle is said to have claimed thousands of lives, and lost Kutch to Kalora's forces. For a secondary account in Gujarati, see A. Keshavji Dwivedi, op. cit., pp. 51–53.

22 Goswamy and Dallapiccola, *A Place Part. Painting in Kutch, 1720–1820*, p. 36: "...Ramsingh apparently survived his great patron Lakhpatji (1741–60), over whose remains he built the well-known *chhatri*, and lived well into the reign of Godji II (1760–78), for whom he had started building a palace in Mandvi." Although Ramsingh Malam's work on the sumptuous interiors of the Aina Mahal is much documented, little scholarly attention has been paid to his influence on the architecture and ornamentation of the city as a whole; besides tutoring artists and sculptors, members of the *salaat* community maintain that he trained *salaat* builders in the art of sculptural decoration, influencing the image of the city in subtle ways. See also 'A Collaborative Canvas.'

23 Kalora, while retreating, constructed an enormous barrier of earth now known as the Allah bund that would cut Kachchh off from the eastern bank of the Indus, divert the river, and create an immense salt marsh in its stead.

24 Pannah is reputed to have stayed first in the Hazira of the Vadha Masjid, and was widely respected

for his philosophical beliefs. But he became something of a controversial figure in his first few years in Bhuj, perhaps because he was respected for his spiritual powers and concurrently reviled for his partnership with Raidhanji II, whom he had inspired to convert to Islam in 1790. This is, of course, a matter of historical interpretation, for which there is no irrefutable primary evidence.

25 See, for example, A. Keshavji Dwivedi, op. cit., 1876, pp. 55–56. This particular account is a secondary retelling of events which had occurred more than eighty years previous to Dwivedi's description of events. Considerable historiographic licence may have been taken in its interpretation and narration, yet this "fact" has been cemented in contemporary historicism as irrefutable and absolute in the absence of primary records.

26 Interview and field trip to Mekan Dada's shrine with Pramod Jethi in December 2003. Mekan Dada typifies, again, the colourful personality to whom a city will eventually ascribe a monument or landmark. Popular lore has it that he roamed Kachchh accompanied by a pet dog and a donkey; a shrine and *dela* devoted to him have survived adjacent to Nagar Chakla in Bhuj, and are venerated by both Hindus and Muslims. In analyzing Bhuj's cultural evolution, we could either begin with Mekan Dada's story to sleuth out buildings commemorated to him, or work backwards by closely analyzing historic photographs in which we will accidentally "discover" evidence of him to fit into the jigsaw puzzle that is Bhuj's story.

27 For a description of the plague, see also J. McMurdo, 'An Account of the Province of Cutch and of the Countries lying between Guzerat and the River Indus,' in *Transactions of the Literary Society of Mumbai*, vol. II, 1820.

28 M. Postans, op. cit., p. 264: "After many years of negociation (*sic*) with the British Government, whose interference was earnestly desired by the well-disposed of the community, a treaty was eventually formed in the year 1816, between Rao Bharmuljee, the reigning prince, and the Bombay Government; and a subsidized force of British troops were stationed at Njar, with the ostensible object of supporting the power of the Rao against his rebellious chiefs. The protection, afforded by the Sindhian Government to the lawless ruffians who then formed the mercenary troops of these chiefs, has frequently (*sic*) brought us into collision with the Ameers...and so (*sic*) late as 1825, it was found necessary to assemble large bodies of troops in Cutch, to compel these chiefs to a maintenance of their treaty."

29 In a letter dated 23rd June 1819, and addressed to the Governor's Office in Bombay, Captain James McMurdo wrote, "I have the honor to report for the information of government that since I returned to Bhooj I have ascertained the damage sustained in that town to be much greater than I had supposed. The loss in lives has not been correctly ascertained, as bodies continue to be dug out from the ruins. About a thousand have already been found. The fort is in a most ruinous state, but although there is little of it entire, there are few places so completely leveled to the ground as that of Anjar. As near as can be calculated seven thousand houses have been overturned, and few or none in the city left uninjured. The Palace which is an immense mass of building has been dreadfully shattered. All the upper parts overturned, and the pile, as low as the lower floor, rent and shook, so as to render the whole nearly uninhabitable. I am happy to say that the Rao's family has escaped without further loss than already reported. The Ex Rao is removed to tents near those of the [British, *ed.*] residency, where he is guarded by a detachment of 100 Rank and File. The Rao Desul and all the females of the family, are also in tents outside of the town, where I hope to be able to persuade them to remain until some place can be made secure for their reception. I may observe that the whole of Cutch has suffered nearly equally in regard to the loss of houses, yet I am glad to say that the proportion of lives lost in different places bears no affinity. Perhaps Bhooj has lost as many as the whole of Cutch put together." I am indebted to Dr. Roger Bilham, Professor of Geography at the University of Colorado at Boulder, USA, for having painstakingly compiled this amongst other accounts by British officers writing about the 1819 earthquake, and for having consulted detailed hand-written notes in court proceedings available at the India Office Library Records at the British Library in London: the Boards Collections nos. 15426 to 15427, 1820–1821; Volume 620 from the Records Department, India Office Library. F/4/620; and the Bombay Public Consultations, Exams Office of Nov. 1820. Bilham's historical research supports his own geographical analysis of the 2001 earthquake. See also: J. Burnes, *A Narrative of a Visit to the Court of Sinde; A Sketch of the History of Cutch and Some Remarks*

on the Medical Topography of Bhooj, Edinburgh, 1831; and M. Postans, op. cit., p.87.

30 M. Postans, op. cit., p.266: "During the young prince's minority, his country was governed by a regency, in which the name of Colonel Pottinger, the British Resident, was included; but as it has been our policy religiously to abstain from any interference with the internal government of the province, its people retain all those peculiar characteristics which I have endeavoured to describe...The future steady administration of a wise government may remedy these evils; and for whatever advantages may accrue to this province, the community will be indebted to the temperate measures of the British power."

31 For a detailed historical analysis of the Prag Mahal's architectural and social history, see C. W. London, 'The Prag Mahal and Henry St. Clair Wilkins' Architecture,' in C. London, ed., *The Arts of Kutch*, pp.76–93.

32 Substantive, critical interpretations on Khengarji III's reign are rare. A conventional reading of Kutch's history, offered by Rushbrook Williams, paints him as a beneficent ruler. More recent, revisionist interpretations of Khengarji III's contribution to the State, however, suggest that he did little to encourage the development of a state infrastructure. (Correspondence with Praveen Shah, Mumbai, March 2005).

33 In modern-day terms, this appears to have produced a generation of diasporic Kachchhis who cling fiercely to their roots, abstracting and heightening the "reality" of their "Kachchhiness" to an extent where their use of the Kachchhi language, and their adherence to social customs that are fast dying out in the region itself, beg the constant question: who is more 'authentic' – the expatriate or the local?

34 Interviews with Sarojbhai Shukl, Bhuj, 2002; and Prasangbhai Hathi, Bhuj, 2002.

35 Interview with Praveen Shah, Mumbai, March 2003.

36 Ibid.

37 Ibid. These arguments were framed in Mumbai by the orators Surji Vallabbhai and Biradar Yusuf Meherali. Yusuf Meherali's role in the political fray is indeed noteworthy; he could command audiences of ten thousand people at his rallies, and his socialism was infective. Meherali began an active *satyagraha* movement in Mahatma Gandhi's footsteps. A team of Kutchis from Mumbai was given a warm welcome and felicitated in Bhuj's Azad Chowk. The Maharao, disturbed by these events, invited Meherali for negotiations, but with no success. As a symbolic clarion call for change, Vaniawad Chowk was renamed Meherali Chowk. To oppose Meherali's socialist propaganda, the Bhayads – landed farmers and landowners supportive of the king – organized a public meeting on 1st April 1939 and marched through Bhuj on the 3rd, shouting "*Hakk mathe tarap pai karo keshariya.*" They burnt their own white caps in anger.

38 R. Williams, op. cit., p.46.

39 Interview with Praveen Shah, op. cit.

40 Ibid.

41 Interview with Praveen Shah, March 2003.

42 Ibid.

43 Ibid. Pranlal Shah is credited with disrupting the British Government's postal services in Kachchh, as an act of defiance in support of the 1942 "Quit India" Movement.

44 Praveen Shah, op. cit.

45 Much of this history of neighbourhood development in the 1960s stems from my interviews with Jamiyatbhai Vora and Prabodh Mankad, June to August 2003.

46 See "A Collaborative Canvas" for a discussion of the *salaat* builder and his trade.

47 Interviews with Shivlalbhai Odhvani, Bhuj, April 2003.

48 See my interview with Kumudiniben Pancholi, pp. 66–67.

49 I am grateful to B.R. Balachandran at the Environmental Planning Collaborative, Ahmedabad, for this insight.

50 The section which follows on the socio-economic compulsions of developing Madhapar stems from my conversations with Kiran Vaghela in April 2003; and Praveen Shah in March 2003. To my knowledge, there is no secondary literature available on the history of Madhapar's growth.

51 Interview with Kiran Vaghela, op. cit.

52 In the absence of any reliable secondary record on the *salaat* builder community, I have based my narrative on first-person interviews with surviving members of the community in the town of Mandvi, Kachchh, and based my conclusions on an analysis

of select sketchbooks loaned to me by a *salaat* elder. My interviews with members of the community in Mandvi, viz. Narottambhai Ranchod Khetani, his son Mansukhbhai Narottam Salaat, his nephew Girishbhai Pranlal, and Mahendrabhai Shantilal, were conducted in February 2004. Very preliminary, unpublished research on the community has been conducted by Uday Shelat, Professor of Architecture at the Maharaja Sayaji Rao University, Baroda, Gujarat, but it is almost twenty years old and currently unavailable.

53 Interviews with Shivlalbhai Odhvani and Narottambhai Khetani, February 2004.

54 Ibid.

55 This idea stems from my discussions with Vinod Gajjar, a descendant of the *suthaar* community, in March 2004; discussions with Muhammed Husein Khatri in 2003 and 2004; conversations with Narottambhai Khetani; and from a comparison of drawings and paintings made available to me by members of the community in Mandvi. See also J. Jain, 'Domestic Wood-Carvings of Kutch: Cross-Cultural Infuences,' in C. London, ed., op. cit., pp. 106–117. He writes, p.107, "The Hindu *suthar*, carpenters, of Kutch who mainly worked under the patronage of upper castes, such as Rajputs, Brahmins, Bhatias, Lohanas, and Jain and Hindu Banias, fashioned intricately carved wooden columns, pillars, brackets, balconies, ceilings, pigeon-houses, doors, and windows with ornate floral motifs, birds, animals and human figures. Their style was a clear off-shoot of the aristocratic wood-carvings of Saurashtra and especially of north Gujarat…Similarly, trade-related migrations of the Bhatias and Jains brought into Kutch new tastes and idioms from elsewhere. For the execution of woodwork, in these imported styles, Gurjar carpenters from Gujarat and Maru carpenters from Rajasthan were brought to Kutch to undertake commissions…" See also the *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency* (1880), p.125, which describes the *suthar*'s trade thus: "Carpenters, *suthárs*, chiefly from Gujarat, have been settled in Cutch from a very early date. Nearly 2000 families, 1200 Hindu and 800 Musalmán, are scattered over the province…Rising at six they work from eight to twelve, rest, and again work from two to six. Skilled carpenters generally save, investing their money in ornaments. Among the Hindus, caste influence is strong, and caste dinners are given on occasions of marriage and death. They may follow any other craft, but are not allowed to drink wine. They rarely send their children to school. It is said that, in former times, a carpenter, *suthár*, was not thought to be skilled in his calling, unless he had read a book called *Rájvallabh*, treating of the principles of carpentry mixed with much religious teaching. Originally in Sanscrit, this book was translated into Prákrit. No Gujaráti version has been made, and as the carpenters are uneducated, it is now seldom read."

56 The word "*kamaagar*" is believed to be etymologically derived from *kamaan*, meaning bow, implying that in centuries past they might have produced bows-and-arrows in the service of the Maharaos of Kutch, or perhaps even earlier. See U. Mehta, 'Kamangar Painters of Kachh,' in *The India Magazine. Of her people and culture*, vol.9, July 1989, pp. 29–39. See also the *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency* (1880), p.127, in which it is noted that "There are in Bhuj about fifteen Musalmán families of painters, *kamángar*, who are said to have come from Delhi. They make toys, shields, and sticks, and colour them with different dyes. Shield-making is one of the special Cutch industries. The *kamángar*s import rhinoceros and elephant hides from Zanzibár, work them into semi-transparent discs of various sizes, paint them, and without any help from leather workers mount them as shields. The fewer the flaws and stains the greater is the value of the shield. Measuring generally about 2 ½ feet across, the rhinoceros shields vary in price from 2s. to £10 (Rs. 1–100). Those for nobles and chiefs are gold or silver mounted, and sometimes studded with gems. Shield makers have no particularly busy season, and in the rains are more or less idle…"

57 Some of the most striking examples of this art are to be found in the town of Suthri and its neighbouring village of Sandhan, where *kamaagar* work adorns not only courtyard walls inside houses but the exterior facades of buildings, strikingly *tromp l'œil* in its treatment.

58 *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency*, (1880), pp.127–128. "There are seventy-five families of wood and ivory bracelet makers, *chudgars* or *maniárs*, twenty-five of them Hindus and the rest Musalmáns. They live at Mándvi, Bhuj, and Anjár. The Musalmáns' ancestors were Rajput horse-dealers, who about 250 years ago were converted to Islám, and according to the story, were taught bracelet making by a holy man of Kodinár near Junágad. Since then

they go by the name of *maniárs*, from *mani*, the Sindhi for a bracelet. They work chiefly in ivory and blackwood, and also make small boxes of rhinoceros hide. Ivory boxes are of two sorts, edged and without edges. The edged are always covered in the middle by gold foil, those without edges have no gold. Blackwood bracelets are always edged, and covered either with brass, silver, or gold. The materials are supplied by Mándvi and Anjár traders, chiefly Vániás and Bhátiás, who brig the ivory from Zanzibár and the blackwood from the Malabár coast."

59 J. Gillow and N. Barnard, *Traditional Indian Textiles*, London, 1991, p. 58; and J. Frater, 'Elements of Style. The Artisan Reflected in Embroideries of Western India,' in N. Fisher, ed., *Mud, Mirror and Thread. Folk Traditions of Rural India*, Ahmedabad, 1995, especially her section on 'Kutch and Saurashtra: The Influence of Courtly Styles,' p. 90, and her own reference to J.M. Nanavati, M.P. Vora, and M.A. Dhaky, *The Embroidery and Beadwork of Kutch and Saurashtra*, Ahmedabad, 1966, p. 11.

60 W. Foster, ed., *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe*, London, 1899, vol. I, pp. 224–225, "Jahangir's interest in painting was passionate and connoisseurly... On the sixth of August in 1616, when Sir Thomas Roe, the English Ambassador, had given Jahangir a painting that he 'was confident that noe man in India could equall,' the emperor boasted that one of his artists could make a 'Coppy soe like it that I should not knowe myne owne.' That night, 'hee sent for mee, being hastie to triumph in his workmen, and shewed me 6 Pictures, 5 made by his man, all pasted on one table (cardboard), so like that I was by candle-light troubled to discerne which was which...,' quoted in S. C. Welch, *Imperial Mughal Painting*, New York, 1978, p. 27. The *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency* (1880), p.126, on the other hand, suggests a more direct, if Orientalist, connection with Islam from the northwest: 'There are about fifty families of Hindu embroiderers. About 250 years ago a Musalmán beggar, *fakir*, skilled in embroidery, is said to have come from Sind, and taught his art to some families of the shoemaker, *mochi*, caste, who both in Bhuj and Mandvi are famous for their skill. They work in silk, with a hooked needle like a broad awl on silk cloth, *mashru*, on broadcloth, net, and canvas. With a silk thread in one hand, the artist works with the other without any design sketched on the cloth or even placed before him, and with wonderful speed forms letters, leaves, fruit, flowers, animals, and human figures. Some of them keep for sale a stock of caps, tapes, cushions, bodices and robes, while others make them to order..."

61 J. Gillow and R. Barnard, op. cit., p. 58.

62 W.R.T. Wilkinson and M. Hawkins, "Kutch Silver: A Meeting of East and West." In C. London, op. cit., pp. 136–145. While acknowledging the fact that Ramsingh Malam's life story is "the stuff of adventure films", the authors concede the possibility that a perhaps more realistic osmosis between Holland and Kachchh might have happened thanks to long-standing Dutch commerce with the Indian coast. They write, p. 138, "Kachchh was the last stopping-off point in India for Dutch vessels navigating the East Asian trade routes. These vessels carried Dutch goods to Kutch from Ceylon, which for nearly two centuries had been a Dutch colony. The decoration found on early nineteenth-century Kachchh silver pieces, with their characteristic trailing vines and bunches of grapes, borrows heavily from the decorative motifs adorning Dutch silverwork from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In addition, the distinctive repoussé borders found on virtually all Kachchhi work from the mid to late nineteenth century can be likened to decorative forms embellishing Dutch pieces of a slightly earlier vintage."

63 The *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency* (1880), pp. 122–123, offers a particularly vivid account of the practice of gold- and silver-working in Bhuj, and its observations may support my contention that there was a considerable overlap between the trade crafts and an exchange of ideas between unrelated professions which inextricably linked craft-making communities together. Of interest, in particular, is the writer's observation that "[t]he best gold worker in Bhuj is by caste a carpenter, and of the rest one is by caste a coppersmith and another a shoemaker."

64 Ibid., p.140.

65 J. Gillow and N. Barnard, op. cit., pp. 92–93.

66 *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency*, op. cit., p.126, in which it is noted that "There are about 165 families of dyers, 112 of them Musalmáns, the descendants of converts of the Khombhátri and Khatri castes, and 53 of them Hindus of the Khatri caste. Some 250 years ago, the Rao asked their ancestors to come from Sind to Bhuj...The Khatris have work throughout the year, but during the rainy season the Khombhátria are nearly idle. The busy season

of both is in the month of January, *Posh*...As a class they are hardworking and thrifty, and both have guilds for settling their trade disputes."

67 J. Gillow and N. Barnard, op. cit., p. 96.

68 Interview with members of Ghanshyambhai Jardosi's family in Bhuj, March 2002. The family are the last descendants of a community which used to live in Haveli Falia, but they are now employed in banking. The practice of *zardos* survives, however, in the neighbouring town of Mandvi.

69 Excepting the mid-19th century *calotype*, which used a paper negative, and the very early *daguerreotype* and *tintype*, neither of which required negatives, most 19th-century photographs were made on glass plate negatives. Early glass plate negatives used a process that required them to be coated just before use, and hence were known as "wet-plate" negatives. Although dry plate negatives were introduced as early as 1864, these were not very sensitive, and it was not until after improvements were made to them that dry plates began to be widely used in the early 1880s. Both wet and dry plates could be further classified according to the emulsions used to "fix" them; these were usually albumen, gelatin or a substance called collodian. For an explanation of the photographic method, see, for example, B. Coe, and M. Hawarth-Booth: *A guide to early photographic processes*, London, 1983; and B. Newhall, *The history of photography: from 1939 to the present*, Boston, 1988.

70 In Bhuj, some of the more enterprising photographers, such as Muljibhai Gujjar, who came from a family of artists and craftsmen and who was one of the first to appreciate the novelty of city photography, even thought of ingenious ways to strap a camera onto the backs of camels.

71 Various means of mechanically printing photographic images on paper were developed in the 1860s, including halftone, photogravure, photolithography, and others. Albumen prints were introduced about 1850, and were widely used from 1860 to 1890. This emulsion was usually placed on very thin paper, and while drying it tended to cause the paper to curl, hence the practice of pasting these papers to cardboard backings.

72 Many such photographs are to be seen in the collections of the Aina Mahal Museum, Bhuj.

73 See my full interview with Praveen Shah, pp. 244–245.

74 For an exhaustive description of the Nagpanchmi procession, see KS Dilipsinhji, op. cit., pp. 38–49.

75 The Darbargarh presents an unusual challenge in artistic attribution. Theories abound as to who authored its lavishly western interiors, but these ideas remain circumscribed by the unavailability of a conclusive primary historical source. A widely accepted reference remains *The Black Hills. Kutch in History and Legend* by L.F. Rushbrook Williams. The Aina Mahal demands rigorous research into its connection with Holland through Ramsingh Malam, and must be viewed more imaginatively in the context of a larger Dutch influence on art in the region.

76 M. Postans, op. cit., pp.37–41.

77 Extract from the *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency*, vol. V, *Cutch, Pálanpur, and Mahi Kántha*, Bombay, 1880, pp. 216–217.

78 There are few well-researched references to the Darbargarh and its component buildings. See, for example, P. Jethi and C. London, 'A Glorious Heritage: Maharao Lakhpatji and the Aina Mahal' in C. London, ed., *The Arts of Kutch*, London, Marg Publications, 2000, pp. 48–61; A. Jaffer, 'The Aina Mahal: An Early Example of 'Europeanerie',' op. cit., pp. 62–75; and C. London, 'The Prag Mahal and Henry St. Clair Wilkins' Architecture,' op. cit., pp. 76–93.

79 M. Postans, op. cit., pp.60–61.

80 While the state government deliberated an appropriate policy framework for urban reconstruction, the Environmental Planning Collaborative and the Centre for Environmental Planning and Technology (CEPT), Ahmedabad, separately began work to begin documenting and proposing early solutions to the destruction in Bhuj. Much of their preliminary work proved an early impetus to the government's elementary decision about whether to resettle Bhuj's population *in situ* or not. The early work by CEPT and EPC marked – notably – the only foray by non-government organizations into cities and towns in the absence of a clear reconstruction policy. This was in sharp contrast to the potpourri of NGOs flocking to villages. See, for example, EPC, CMAG, KNNA: *Initiative for Planned and Participatory Reconstruction (IPPR). Draft Report on Work Done in Kutch Upto April 24, 2001*, unpublished report; and, EPC, CMAG, KNNA, *Interim Report. Initiative for Planned and Participatory Reconstruction (IPPR)*, unpublished report, December 8, 2001.

81 For a discussion on the government's institutional and regulatory framework for an urban reconstruction policy, B.R. Balachandran and A. Tyabji, 'The Reconstruction of Bhuj. A Case Study in the Integration of Disaster Mitigation into Planning & Financing Urban Infrastructure After an Earthquake,' esp. pp. 5–6, in *Proceedings of the Asian Regional Conference on Urban Infrastructure Financing and Disaster Mitigation*, USAID/India Office of India Programs, March 14–15, 2003, Colombo, Sri Lanka.

82 See Bhuj Area Development Authority (BHADA), *Draft Development Plan of Bhuj, 2011. Part. 1: Existing Situation, Surveys, Studies, Analysis, Policies, Proposals and Programmes. Unpublished report submitted under Section 16 of the Gujarat Town and Urban Development Act, 1976*. Unpublished State Government report, December 2001; and, BHADA, *Draft Development Plan for Bhuj, 2011 (Submitted under Section 16 of the Gujarat Town Planning and Urban Development Act, 1976)*. Unpublished State Government report, December, 2001.

83 For a detailed methodology behind planners' consultations with "stakeholders", see, in particular, Bhuj Area Development Authority (BHADA), *Draft Development Plan of Bhuj, 2011. Part 3: Support Documents. Unpublished report submitted under Section 16 of the Gujarat Town and Urban Development Act, 1976*. Unpublished State Government report, December 2001, pp. 1–5; and, A. Tyabji, 'The Bhuj Development Plan: A Participatory Planning Process,' in *Journal of the Indian Institute of Architects*, vol. 67, no. 3, March 2002, pp.14–19.

84 See BHADA, *Draft Development Plan for Bhuj, 2011: Part 1 (Submitted under Section 16 of the Gujarat Town Planning and Urban Development Act, 1976)*, op. cit.

85 For a technically rigorous description of the Town Planning Scheme process and its rationales, see U. Patel, ed., *Town Planning Scheme Manual*, unpublished report, EPC, Ahmedabad, 2005. An extract of the report is also available on the World Wide Web, on www.epconnet.com/publications.

86 See also p.277.

87 Only several months later would NGOs working in Kachchh's towns begin to organize collectives of people, but even this had largely to do with shoring up livelihoods in textile production, the easiest, most exportable cultural commodity in Kachchh. See KNNA, GSDMA and UNDP, *Coming Together*. 4th and 5th eds. Unpublished reports, Bhuj, Kutch, 2002 and 2003. These publications chronicled the status of reconstruction in towns and villages throughout the region, focusing on particular on shelter, health, education and livelihood.

88 See Bhuj Area Development Authority (BHADA), *Draft Development Plan of Bhuj, 2011. Part 2: Development Control Regulations. Unpublished report submitted under Section 16 of the Gujarat Town and Urban Development Act, 1976*. Unpublished State Government report, December 2001.

89 EPC, CMAG, KNNA: 'Historical Sites and their Significance. With Ajaniji, March 19, 2001,' in *Initiative for Planned and Participatory Reconstruction (IPPR). Draft Report on Work Done in Kutch Upto April 24, 2001*, op. cit., pp. 28–30.

90 A. Tyabji, ed., *Catalogue and List of Heritage Buildings in Bhuj*, unpublished report, USAID-FIRE Initiative for Planned and Participatory Reconstruction/ EPC, 2002.

91 See Bhuj Area Development Authority (BHADA), *Draft Development Plan of Bhuj, 2011. Part 2: Development Control Regulations*, op. cit.

92 See also p.16.

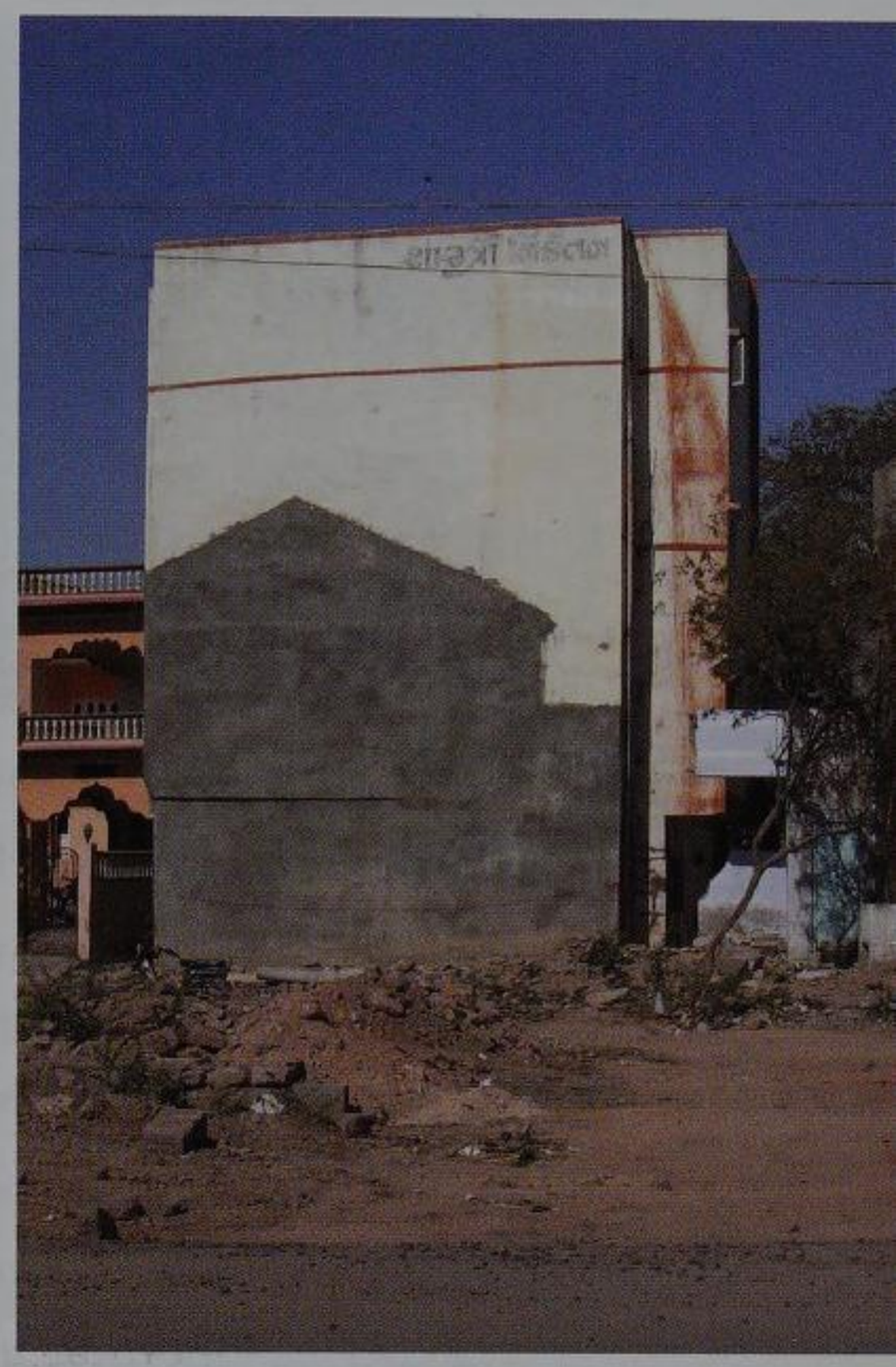
APPENDIX: A WORD ON METHOD

The subject of this book has changed course several times, reflecting its different moods in the months after the earthquake which struck Bhuj in 2001. When I first approached citizens in February, 2001, ten days after the earthquake, about the possibility of mapping the destruction to historic sites in the city of Bhuj, several people told me that they considered it counter-productive, almost insensitive, to think about history: why, they asked, should one even think of nostalgically venerating historic buildings and thinking about old ways of life when doing so would only serve to bring back horrifying memories of a disaster and of loved ones lost to two minutes of hell? Six months later, as I continued living in Bhuj and talking to residents, it seemed as though they had begun to change their minds: more and more people seemed receptive to the possibility that thinking nostalgically could be a useful tool to healing past wounds, and to reconstructing images and memories that they had about the past. It was at this point that I approached a few citizens to begin talking about writing a book of this sort.

One year later, I was still living in Bhuj, and people's attitudes, at once frustrating and exhilarating to hear, had changed yet again. These shifting attitudes have in a sense given the book its direction, broadening its scope. Many residents now told me that public nostalgia for old Bhuj was not just a cathartic indulgence, but that it should be considered almost as a kind of tool to rethinking the city's basic priorities as people began making sense of what reconstruction would involve. They told me that if we could, in the book, use nostalgia as a *catalyst*, as a *strategy* to helping people think more clearly about what was happening to their city, we could actually present a case for the city's aesthetically and culturally sensitive reconstruction and future development.

Only a few weeks after the disaster, a group of four architects and I began the work of photographically documenting as many historic buildings as we could in the old city. In total, these architects surveyed three hundred and forty historic buildings within a fifty-six square–kilometre radius, of which two hundred and eighty alone were still barely left standing. Architects trudged over mounds of rubble through which one could still discern

The shadowed outline of a house, its only remnant after its demolition, 2003.



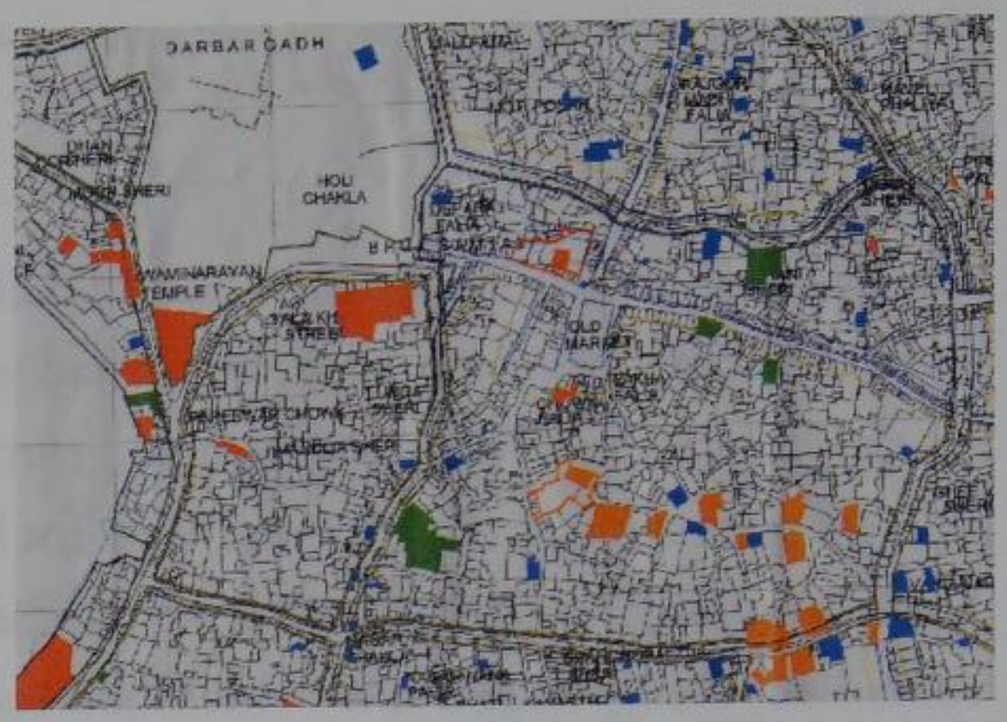
the flesh of unclaimed bodies. Many buildings surveyed were considerably worse for wear and had to be demolished in the process of removing rubble, extricating trapped bodies, or clearing streets to make way for bulldozers. This book features photographs of those buildings which have remained, along with a few which had to be demolished outright when rubble was being removed. The book's commentary extends to how some historic buildings have now been restored to full occupancy.

I began work on the book in April 2002, contacting amateur historians and writers in Bhuj to ask that they contribute pieces on various aspects of the city, including its political and cultural history, social customs and rituals, and artistic legacy. Their unpublished notes have contributed much to my speculations of how royal patronage might have shaped the historic and modern city prior to the earthquake, its monuments, and its craft-making communities.

Mapping historic buildings

A week after the earthquake of January 26th, 2001, I procured outdated and inaccurate ward and *gamtal* (village) maps from the Municipality of Bhuj, with help from a local resident, Haresh Dholakia. Parul Choudhary, a colleague of mine at the Environmental Planning Collaborative, and I began with plotting major historic buildings and sites on a map, consulting with elderly residents familiar with the walled city, who could pinpoint precisely where seventy-two historic buildings should be indicated on it.[89] We then digitized it using AutoCAD, a computer programme that would allow us to 'layer' thematic information cartographically. Elderly residents then took turns to identify and plot major *chowk*s, *sheri*s and *falia*s on the digitized map, which was then improved using AutoCAD. We visited the walled city often with residents to verify the location of our buildings and to photograph them.

Armed with a detailed, plot-level map that had been prepared for the Gujarat Urban Development Company, we assigned three architects to the field to spend four days taking photographs of historic buildings, defining criteria by which they were to select their subjects, and asking that they be as thorough as they could even though streets and lanes were blocked by rubble. Architects were asked, by and large, to follow guidelines set by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) and the Indian National Trust



Above left: A team of architects painstakingly plotted their pedestrian route through neighbourhoods in the walled city guided by a highly inaccurate property map made available to them a few days after the earthquake.

Above right: The location of historic buildings, plotted during field trips into the walled city, guided by inaccurate maps, was then transferred onto computer-generated maps and laid over a new, conceptual, network of roads for the walled city in the recon-struction process.

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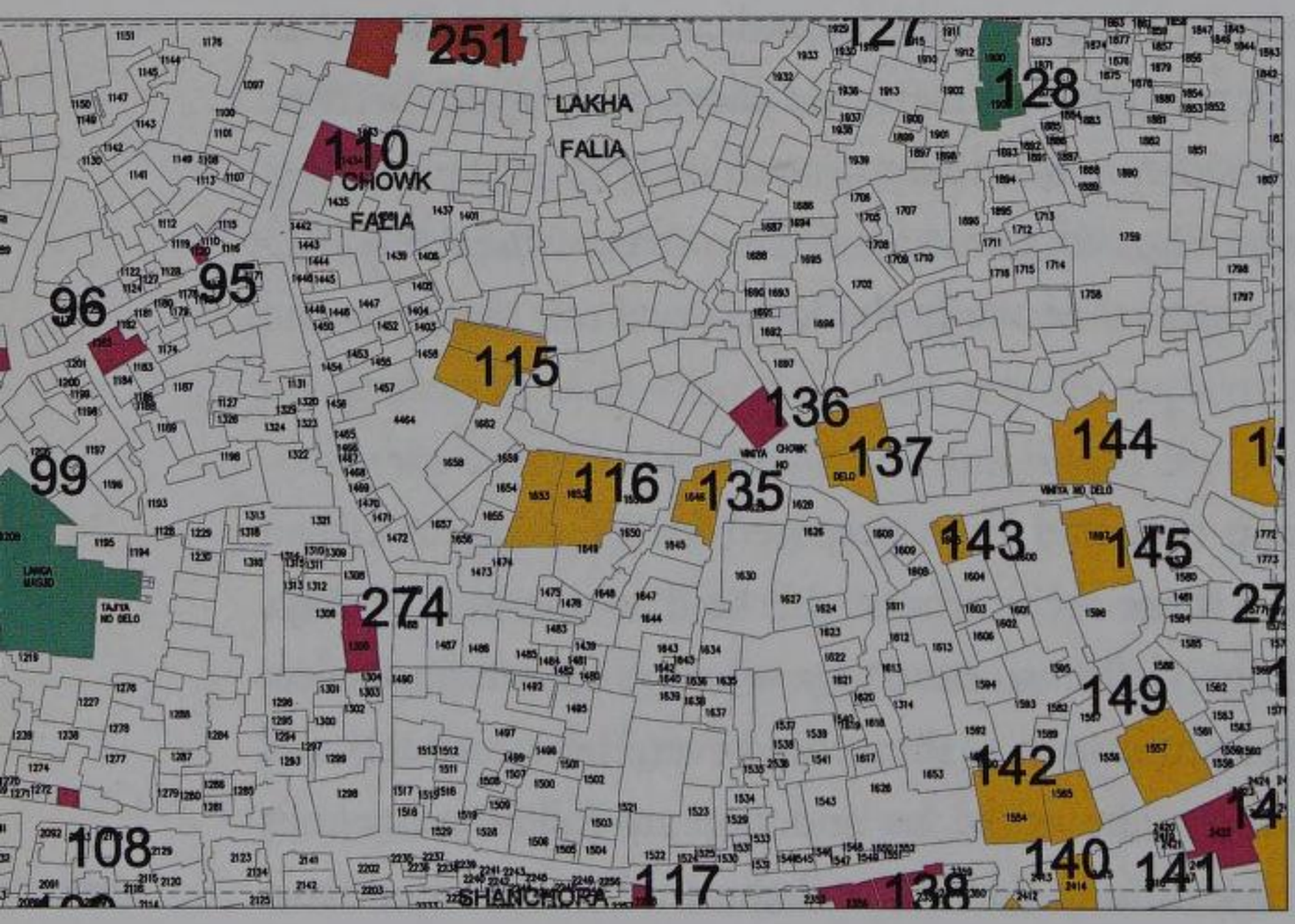
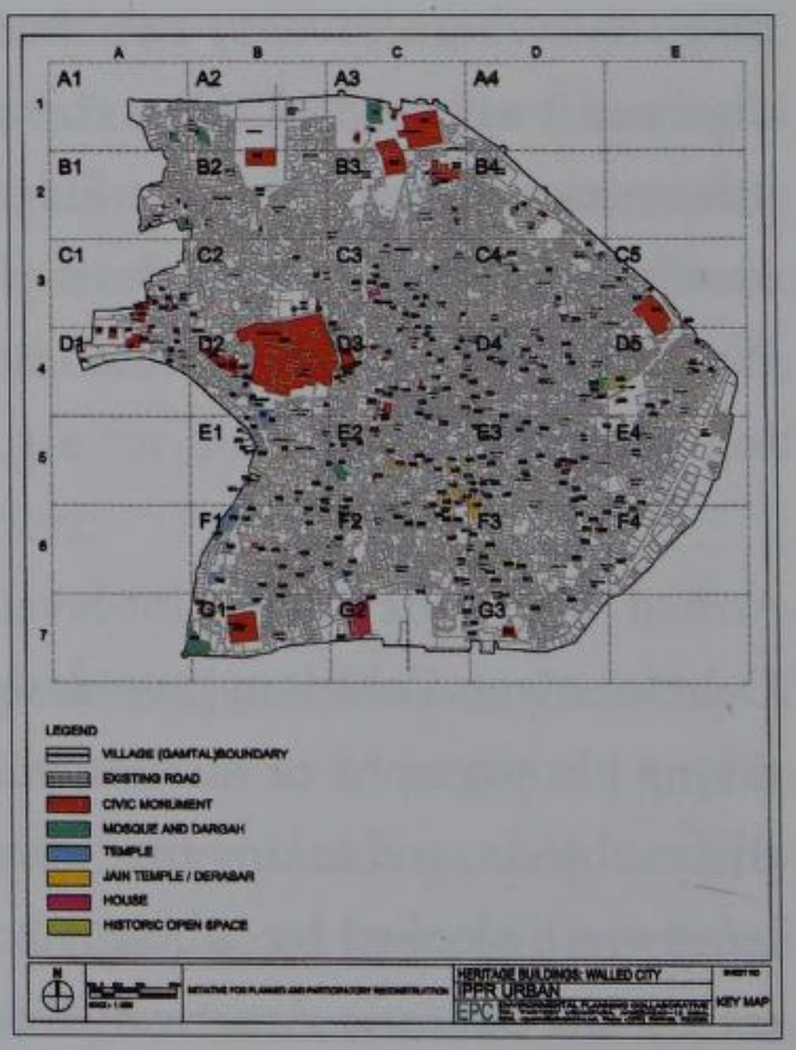
for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH). Each photographer was assigned a third of the walled city to cover on foot. Each was to survey large and small streets in their assigned sectors, photographing buildings from all four angles, wherever possible. In cases where all four sides of a structure were inaccessible, photographers would be required to record ornamental details and to indicate their position in or on the facade of buildings.

This collection of photographs was finally catalogued and sorted by building type into temples, mosques, houses, civic monuments, and historic open spaces.[90] The catalogue was intended to represent a documentary record for city residents, and to provide a future resource to the tourism industry, when the photographic records could be re-edited as a pictorial guidebook for visitors.





Each building depicted in the catalogue was assigned a unique cataloguing number. The photograph for each property was then correlated with the official city survey number assigned to the plot of land on which the historic building stood. It was a first step to comprehensively document historic buildings after a disaster before rubble-removing tractors moved in to clear houses, streets and neighbourhood squares.

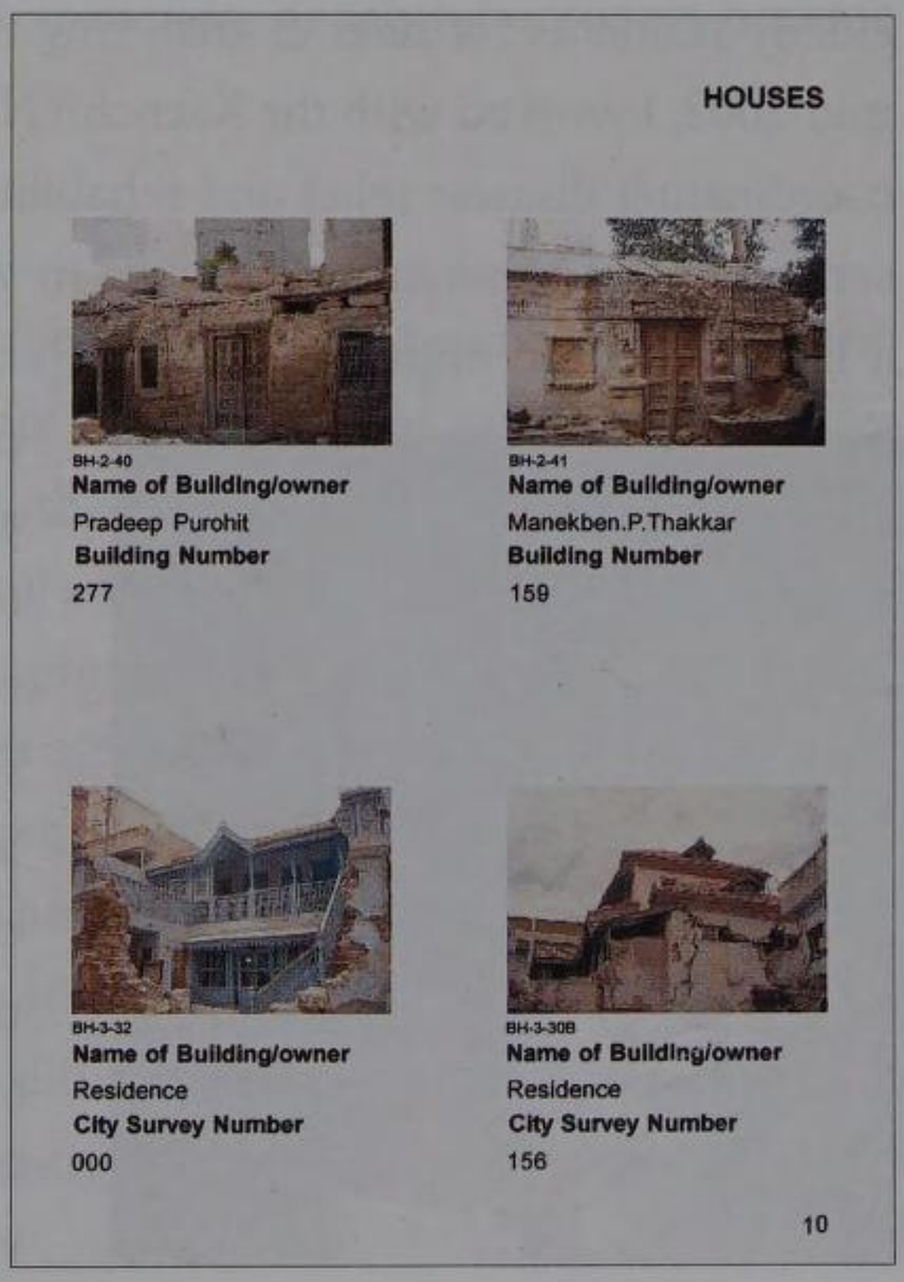
We then compiled a list of historic buildings using Mumbai's heritage listing as a model, but keeping in mind that the descriptive variables one might use after a disaster would differ sharply from the ordinary listing process, given the constraints of time and the absence of property records to expand our knowledge of each structure. The list featured names of buildings which may not have been photographed, but which nevertheless had been plotted by residents on our map. The list eventually came to include approximately 380 structures, of which 320 had been photographed, and which included severely damaged, privately-owned houses that we expected would be cleared by homeowners and rubble-removing contractors in the days to come. The photographic record finally came to include approximately 240 historic buildings in the walled city alone, and 80 buildings outside the walled city but within the limits of the Bhuj Area Development Authority (BHADA).

We distilled a final list over a period of two weeks, working with city residents and two local historians to speculate the approximate construction date for each building. Although appended as an annexure to a draft of the Development Control Regulations submitted by EPC to BHADA, the Government of Gujarat chose not to publish it because property records associated with each historic buildings were difficult to procure and verify in time.[91]

Right: The photographic record of buildings was cross-referenced with maps depicting the location of historic buildings. This, if published, would have proven an invaluable resource to residents in search of houses in an otherwise unrecognizable landscape.

Facing page:
Below left: A photographic catalogue of 380 historic buildings which were later mapped. A master map of the walled city illustrates the location of historic buildings in the walled city's remarkably dense urban fabric.

Below right: Buildings on the map were coded according to their use: civic monuments, sacred buildings, houses, and open spaces of historic value. These were assigned a unique number, and were further classified by ownership, approximate age, and their survey number, if available at the time.



The author with Umiyashankar Ajani and Rahamtulla Jamadar, two elderly residents who had both been surveyors for the government prior to retiring. The team crosschecked the location, date and probable ownership of all historic buildings identified during their survey of the walled city. This survey would later be refined in the months to come as they began the work of planning the city's reconstruction.

Researching historic photographs

Gauri Joshi, a colleague of mine, and I then sought historic photographs of the city to support our documentary record. We realized quickly that photographic research is a tricky affair because it throws up both inductive and deductive ideas: one either wants to confirm people's speculations about their city by looking for the right clues in the right photograph, or one is tempted to use the photograph as a basis from which to uncover even more puzzling questions. The photographs in this book have been collected over a period of eighteen months from a number of sources: from major archives and museums in Britain and the United States; professional photographers in Bhuj and Mumbai; collections belonging to museum trusts in Bhuj; foreign tourists; local businesses; architectural and planning organizations in Ahmedabad; and ordinary residents who were generous enough to have contributed a picture or two towards reconstructing images of the city.

Workshops

Stumped by old photographs I could not decipher, I realized that I would have to turn to elderly residents for help in analyzing their content. Over the course of three weeks in mid-2002, I worked with the Kachchh Nav Nirman Abhiyan, a local consortium of NGOs coordinating disaster relief and rehabilitation in several Kachchhi villages, to organize a series of "tent seminar" workshops in which historic photographs were projected from a laptop onto an impromptu screen, and at which participants deliberated the historic content of each picture.[92] These workshops were attended largely by elderly residents of Bhuj able to recognize photographic subjects from the 1920s onward; our eldest participant was 92 years old. The task of attributing many of the photographs included in this book has proven to be a deeply emotive, shared experience, and conclusions about their content sometimes difficult to distill.

Workshop with residents in 2002, Bhuj.

A seminar with elderly residents in Bhuj, a few months after the earthquake, to discuss the city's historical sites, using historic photographs projected onto a screen under a tent at the Kutch Nav Nirman Abhiyan. These discussions helped architects determine the social and architectural significance of places in Bhuj that should in future be conserved.

Such encounters sometimes led to fascinating insights about the city's growth, pointing to issues we might never have imagined as being connected to the city's historical development – issues such as the history and mythology behind certain monuments, how streets took on their unusual names, or how artists and stonecutters in 19th-century Bhuj made perhaps the city's most astute businessmen and politicians.

Interviews

To complement our workshop conversations, we interviewed several hundred people in Bhuj over two years. The book's voices were chosen from my tape-recordings and interview notes in conversation with over a hundred elderly residents, aided by three Lalan College students in Bhuj who did considerable fieldwork with me in 2002. We asked residents open- and closed-ended questions about life in the city, particularly specific incidents related to its urban development. Each interview was carefully transcribed from digital files, translated, and each transcript rechecked for its accuracy. We were continually surprised by what people actually had to say: our conversations were a mix of humour, nostalgia, long reflective cadences, some sarcasm, and bitterness, as people revisited slices of life from their youth. In some instances, delightful accounts became appropriate captions to photographs.

Writing

When we began discussions about the book's concept with six residents of Bhuj and Mapin Publishing in 2002, it seemed appropriate that we should put together a non-fictional compilation of maps and photographs that would simply illustrate a survey of damage to historic buildings and sites in Bhuj's walled city. Later, as we did more fieldwork, uncovering a treasure trove of historic photographs and speaking to residents, it occurred to us that the sheer complexity of description, and the difficulty of mapping cultural associations, would require a more nuanced, inductive approach to analyzing and presenting information based upon fieldwork. This became, in a word, the researcher's qualitative nightmare. It seemed finally appropriate, therefore, to present the book as a potpourri of visual and narrative stimuli – very different perspectives on the city, each the subject of a chapter – useful to citizens, tourism operators and government officials in search of initiatives and ideas.

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GLOSSARY

N.B.: The spelling of Kutch has been used to identify the period of monarchical rule prior to the state's merger with the Indian Union in 1948. The spelling of Kachchh refers to the region after its merger with India.

aalaap: introductory section to an Indian raga, played without rhythmic structure in an exploratory manner. See also raga.

aangan: courtyard

aar: adj. *aari*: hooked needle used to embroider

aaro: pl. *aara*: equivalent to the Hindi ritual ghat, or progression of steps sloping down to a water- or river-front.

aatariya: terrace

aazadi amar rahe: Hindi slogan, lit. 'may freedom prevail'

agyaari: Zoroastrian fire temple

areettha: fruit of the *arneca* tree

ashadhi beej: Kachchhi New Year's day

Ayurveda: indigenous ancient system of Indian medicine

ajrakh lit.: "keep today", coll. (؟) Kachchhi; technique of hand-block printing unique to Sindh, Kachchh and parts of Rajasthan, in which colour is allowed to absorb and mature in fabric

Apna Bazaar: lit., Our Market

baithak: arrangement of seats

bajaaniya: stilted swordsman

bajoth: stool

bajra-rotla: unleavened bread made from millet

bakshi: Master of Ceremonies

baraat: groom's party

bandhani tie-and-dye

bania: coll., trader, Vania

batrees lakshan: lit., thirty-two qualities, used as metaphor for "perfect qualities"

bawa: ascetic

bhaagu: crocodile

Bharat Matani Jai: Gujarati, slogan meaning "Long Live Mother India"

bharat: embroidery

bhayad: lit., brotherhood, or alliance between male members of the Royal Family

bhavai: traditional folk theatre of Gujarat

bhoi varo aaro palanquin *ghat*

chaddar: token offering of two coconuts and a *kori*. See also *kori*.

chakki: flour mill

chhaash: buttermilk

chhajja: lintel

Chhatti Bari: lit., the sixth gate, to the walled city

chabutra: bird feeder

chakla: junction of streets with open space

chandla: Hindu ritual mark on forehead

chavdi: police station

chhattedi, or *chhatri*: cenotaph

choghadia: musical performance

choona: coat of lime, used as paint

chopdar: royal herald

choino: trouser-like garment for men

chowk: square

chowki: coll., police station

chulha: kitchen stove

dal: lentils

dildal: coll., from Daldal, ceremonial horse

dandiya raas: dance using sticks, from Gujarat

durbar: royal court, or, a class of warriors loyal to the Kutch Court

dargah: Muslim shrine

dela: entrance to a cluster of houses in a *falia*

deli: small entrance to a single house

delo: cluster of houses

derasar: Jain temple

deri: shrine

Deshra Parmeshra: honorary title bestowed by people on Rao Deshalji

dhabbu: unit of old Kutch State currency, prior to 1948, equivalent to two *dhinglo* coins and one-eighth of a *kori*

dhamaal: coll., dance specific to the Siddi community

dharmashala: inn

dhinglo: unit of old Kutch State currency, prior to 1948, equivalent to three *trambiyo* coins

dhoti: loincloth

dhua bandh jamaade: coll., lit., turning off the stove and feasting elsewhere

Dhuleti: day after the Hindu festive day of Holi, traditionally a day of playing with powdered colour and water

dilruba: North Indian stringed instrument

divet: wick

diwan: prime minister, see also *nayab diwan*

dhol: double-sided drum

ekta: unity

fahteha: Islamic prayer

falia: cluster of houses, see *dela*

falia mitra mandal: lit., neighbourhood friends' committee

fauzdar: police inspector

gadh rang: fort wall

gaidhar: coll., construction foreman, occasionally master mason

galoli: pellet

gam: coll., village

ganthia: savoury made form chick-pea flour

garba: song, or ritual fire pot

garbi: type of dance

ghar chola: deep red colour used in tie-and-dye bridal sari

gau: unit of measure, 1 *gau* = 2 miles

gau dhan: wealth measured in terms of the number of cattle owned

gau ghat: sloped entrance to pond, for cattle

gau mukhi: L-shaped glove used for counting Hindu ritual prayer beads inside

gau shala: cowshed

garh: fort

geru: ochre

ghaghra: ankle-length, pleated skirt

ghat: progression of steps down to lake, pond, river-front

ghee: clarified butter

ghodar: stables

gilli danda: centuries-old vernacular Indian game played impromptu with two simple sticks of different lengths

gokhala: recess in wall, balcony, or portico

gokuliya lagna: wedding ceremony on the eighth day of the Hindu month of Shravan, also the day of the god Krishna's birth

goli: game of marbles played by children

gorji: royal priest

gulai: bright red colour from the local *keshuda* plant

gulal: saffron-coloured powder used during the festival of Holi

guriya pir: mound of dung cakes, made customarily during the festival of Holi

Gurjar *kadia*: community of masons

haarda: coll. Kachchhi, garland

hathi sthan: old royal elephant enclosure, pre-s1948

haveli: dense courtyard housing, typical of Rajasthan

Holika: mythical Hindu female figure associated with the festival of Holi, sister to King Hiranyakashyap

howdah: ornate, hooded elephant saddle, usually for dignitaries

hunnar kala shala: school for handicraft, founded by Maharao Lakhpatji

Id gah: open ground for Muslim prayer

indhoni: circular head cushion made of grass, used by women to balance water pitchers

Inth Ka Jawaab Patthar Se: title of popular 1950s Indian film, coll., "Tit for Tat"

jaali: architectural screen with perforations

jagir: rent-free estate obtained as a grant in perpetuity from ruler

jagirdar: estate-holder, see *jagir*

Jai Hind: Hindi/Gujarati slogan, meaning, "Long Live India"

jalebi: spiral-shaped Indian sweetmeat made of fine flour, soaked in sugar syrup and deep-fried

jamaat: community, or group

jamaat khana: community meeting place, specific to Islam

jamadar: foot soldier

Jan Sangh: Indian political party, lit. People's Collective

Janmashtmi: day of Hindu god Krishna's birth

jasti-mal: community of wrestlers

jharokha: projecting canopied balcony

juni vas: old neighbourhood

kabaddi: indigenous Indian team sport

kacheri: coll., royal court

Kachchh Nav Nirman Abhiyan: Kachchh Reconstruction Movement

Kachchh Praja Sangh : Kachchh People's Collective

Kachchhi Prajakiya Parishad: Kachchhi People's Congress

Kachchh Sanskruti Manch: Kachchh Forum for Culture

Kachchhiyat: coll., and Urdu, for Kachchhi identity and sense of oneness

karbhari: manager

kamaagar: bow-and-arrow maker, later ornamental painter

kamdar: Secretary to the Royal Household

kanbi: construction workers from Patel clan of Gujarat

kansara: maker of metal utensils

kanya shala: girls' school

Kathak: North Indian classical dance form of Mughal origin

kavi sammelan: symposium of poets

Khadi Gramodyog: handloom industry

Khangi Khata: Privy Purse

Khari Nadi: lit., salt-water river

khawaas: old expression for "rajput" community (not Rajput) of personal attendants to the Court

khichdo: coll., cooked mixture of rice and "moong" pulse

khili sthapna: foundation

khili pujan sthan: lit., site where a symbolic nail commemorating the city's foundation is venerated

khordo: coll., house

kodi: game using cowrie shells, played by children

kori: unit of old Kutch State currency, prior to 1948

kum kum: red mark applied on forehead by married Hindu women

kurta: long Indian shirt

laddoo: Indian sweetmeat

lohar: blacksmith, or ironmonger

lok daira: bardic narratives

magmaathi: bentonite soda

mahant: head priest (Hindu)

Maharao: coll., Maharaja of Kutch State, title bestowed on rulers beginning from Pragmalji I's reign (1698–1715)

Mahi muratib: royal insignia of Kutch State

mahila mandal: women's committee/forum

maholaat: royal quarters

maidan: expanse of ground, or open plain

Mamlatdar: Revenue Department officer heading a taluka. See also *taluka*.

Mangalori: originating from the town of Mangalore

mardana: palace quarters for men

masala: collection or mix of spices, sometimes powdered

mashru: cotton and satin weave

medhi: coll., first floor in a two-storey house

meena kaam: enamel work, painting and engraving on gold and silver ornaments

mela: fair

mian: originally Urdu, male term of respect, suffix to name

mir: bard

mistri: carpenter

mitti: earth

Muharram: Muslim event commemorating the martyrdom of Hussein, grandson of the Prophet Muhammed, in 631 AD

mujra: courtly dance form

mukaam: graveyard

munji maatrabhoomi ke naman: Kachhhi, lit., Salutations to my Motherland

musafirkhana: caravanserai

mushaira: poetry reading, usually Urdu

naach, or nautch dance recital

Naga *bawa*: unclad ascetic

nagaara: see *dhol*

Nagarpalika: Municipal Corporation

nakshi kaam: engraving

nana darbar: petty court

nanaami: funeral bier

nani: small

naubat baazi: performance on kettle drums

navi vas: new neighbourhood

Navratri: Hindu festival of nine nights of revelry, to celebrate Ambe Mata

nayab diwan: Deputy Prime Minister

neem: coll., nimb tree, or Lat. *melia aza dirachta*

nikaasi: wedding party

nishaan: ensign

odhni: cloth used to cover head

ordho: coll., room at the rear of living room, used to store grain, or as bath, or as bedroom

osri: living room

otla: platform, extension of house onto street, used as casual seat

paan: Indian betelnut savoury, eaten after meals

paisa, *pl.* paise: unit of Indian currency. One rupee = 100 paise

pagdi: coll. pagh, turban

pahalvaan: strongman, from the Persian/Urdu

pakhaal: water carrier

panchio, pl. *panchiya*: largest unit of old Kutch State currency, silver, prior to 1948, equivalent to five *koris*

pandal: festive enclosure, used for deities or ceremonies

papad: coll., poppodum

Parsi: coll., follower of the Zoroastrian religion

pathshala: school

patka: cummerbund sash, usually worn by men

peepul: Lat. *ficus religiosa*, tree sacred to Hindus

phuvara: fountain

pir: Muslim holy man

pir ni dargah: shrine to a Muslim holy man

prabhat pheri: patriotic or religious singing while walking

prasad: offering to deity

prasthan: symbolic tokens of betelnut, vermillion and rice wrapped in a bundle

puja: prayer

pukka: finished

qawwaal: singer, usually of Urdu romantic verse or song

raas: dance

raga: broadly defined melodic framework in Indian classical music, to be interpreted extempore by musician

rakhal: protected forest

rangoli: festive pattern of powdered colour, commonly applied to the thresholds of houses

rani: queen

rani *vas*: royal harem, see also *zenan khana*

Rao: king of Kutch State, title bestowed until the beginning of Prahmalji I's reign. See also Maharao.

rasoi: kitchen

rath: chariot

rotla: unleavened village bread made with millet or corn

Saatam Aatham: seventh and eight days of the month of Shravan, celebrated as the birth of the god Krishna

sahib: male term of respect

salaat: coll., architect

samuh lagna: mass community wedding

sangh: collective

saraf, or *shroff*: money-lender

sarangi: North Indian stringed instrument

sati: ritual immolation by Hindu wife on her husband's funeral pyre

satyagraha: protest march

sawaari: coll., aswaari, mounted procession

Smith Seva Sangh: Smith's Assistance Group

sej: lit., minar-shaped, reference to Muslim tazia

setu: bridge

sharanai: coll., Guj. equivalent to the North Indian *shehnai*

sheera: Indian sweetmeat made of wholewheat flour, clarified butter, nuts and raisins

sheri: street, or road

sherwani: long, ceremonial tight trousers

Shiva linga: phallus as symbol of Hindu god Shiva the Destroyer

shree: male title of respect

shikar: hunt

shikhar: pinnacle

siddi: coll., from Arabic *sayyed*, community of descendents of East African slave-warriors

sompura: artisans specializing in temple design and construction

subedar: officer of a small company of soldiers, or provincial governor

surindo: stringed instrument indigenous to Kachchh, parts of Rajasthan, and Sindh and Baluchistan in Pakistan

suthaar: carpenter

syed: Arabic, lit., pure, honorary title, sometime associated with siddi community

taanka: embroidery stitch

tabalchi: player of the Indian tabla drum

talav: lake

taluka: revenue sub-division of district, consisting of several villages

tabut: lit., -shaped, reference to Muharram *tazia*

takht: Urdu/Persian, throne

tazbi: Islamic, similar to rosary with beads

tazia: customary replica of the Islamic *karbala*, mausoleum of Hussein, mounted on the shoulders during annual Muharram procession. See also Muharram

toran: embellishment of textile or wood carving on gate

trambiyo: smallest unit of old Kutch State currency, copper, used prior to 1948

vaastu shastra: Sanskrit, ancient science of building

vadi: sun-dried savoury made of rice flour, later deep-fried

vaid: doctor

vania: trading community, coll. *bania*

vas: area, neighbourhood

vav: stepped well, usually of stone masonry

vesh: a disguise, an impersonation

vyayamshala: gymnasium

wadi: farm

wandi: coll., cluster of houses for a community, or, common community space

zardozi: stretched fabric on an embroidery frame

zari: ornamentation on cloth using silver and gold thread

zenana: royal harem

zenan khana: see zenana

ziggurat: ancient Mesopotamian stepped pyramid

ABBREVIATIONS

BHADA Bhuj Area Development Authority

CEO Chairman and Executive Officer

CEPT Centre for Environmental Planning & Technology University in Ahmedabad

CMAG City Managers' Association of Gujarat

CRUTA Centre for Research on Urban Traditional Architecture

EPC Environmental Planning Collaborative

FICCI Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry

FIRE Financial Institutions Reform Expansion Programme in India, of USAID

GIDC Gujarat Infrastructure Development Corporation

GSDMA Gujarat State Disaster Management Authority

GTPUDA Gujarat Town Planning and Urban Development Act

GUIDE Gujarat Institute of Desert Ecology

HUDCO Housing and Urban Development Corporation

IAS Indian Administrative Service

INTACH Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage

IPPR Initiative for Planned and Participatory Reconstruction

KS Kumar Shri, or, Prince

KMVS Kutch Mahila Vikas Sangathan (organization), or, Women's Development Collective in Kachchh

KNNA Kachchh Nav Nirman Abhiyan

MKS Maharaj Kumar Shri, or, Prince Regent

NGO Non-Governmental Organisation

TCGL Tourism Corporation of Gujarat, Ltd.

UNDP United Nations Development Programme

USAID United States Agency for International Development

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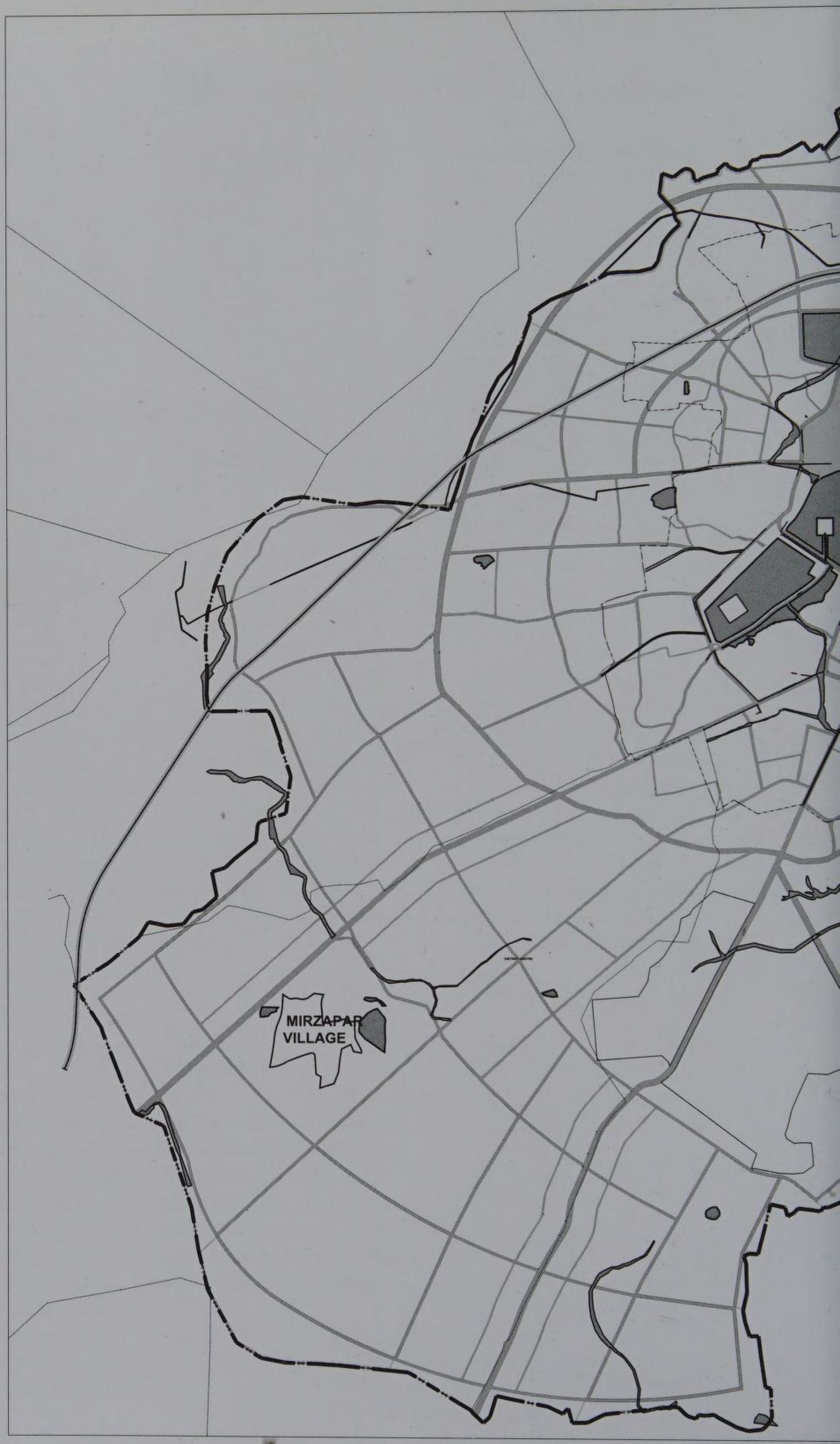
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See also map on pages 156–157

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Azhar Tyabji read art history, history and community planning at university, and has since worked with organizations in India, Morocco and the United States on heritage conservation and urban development projects, most recently with the Environmental Planning Collaborative in Ahmedabad, India. This is his first book.

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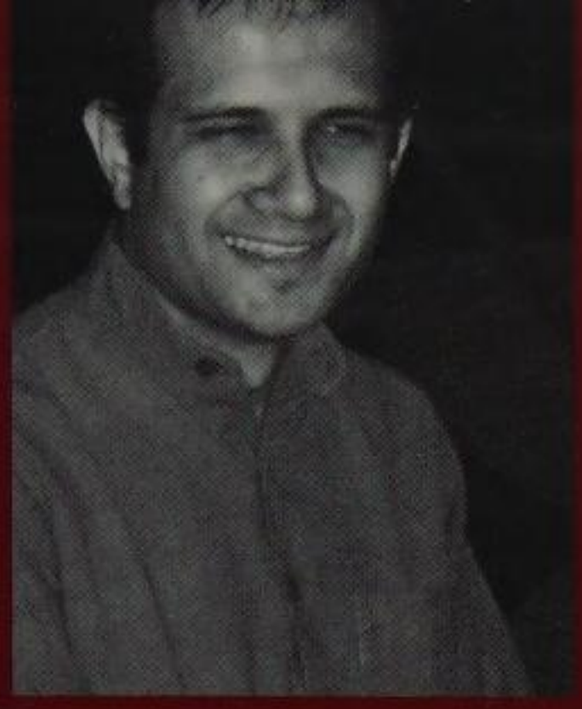

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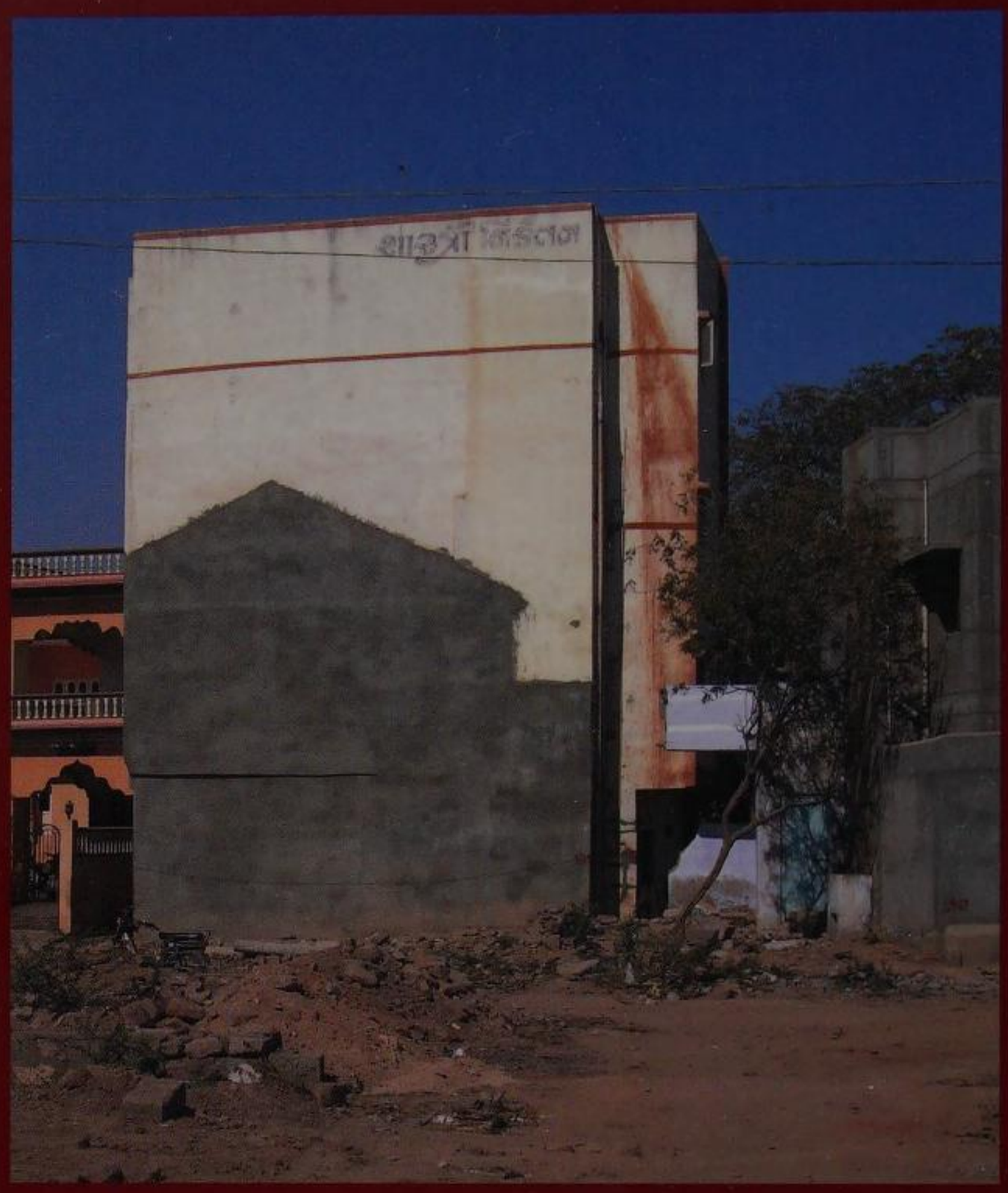

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